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THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
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Oxberry's Edition.

THE
CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS,
A COMEDY;
By Miss Lee.

WITH PREFATORY REMARKS.

THE ONLY EDITION EXISTING WHICH IS FAITHFULLY MARKED
WITH THE STAGE BUSINESS AND STAGE DIRECTIONS,

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatres Royal.

BY W. OXBERRY, Comedian.

London.

PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETORS, BY W. SIMPKIN, AND
R. MARSHALL, STATIONERS' COURT, LUDGATE-STREET;
AND C. CHAPPLE, 59, PALL-MALL.

1823.

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8, White-hart Yard.*

Remarks.

THE CHAPER OF ACCIDENTS.

We must needs confess—and we believe we have often before expressed ourselves to the same effect—that we have very little love for these crying comedies, these mixtures of humour and sentiment, smiles and tears, sunshine and shower, as the Prologue has it; we do, in short, most powerfully and potently believe that whenever the Comic Muse is so indiscreet as to expose herself in this manner to the public gaze, “with one auspicious and one dropping eye,” she cuts at best but a mighty queer kind of figure, and consequently the play before us is by no means a composition to our taste; still while we think it *positively* defective, as a comedy, we are constrained to admit that, *comparatively*, it is a very respectable piece of business, and that if we must perforce endure the representation of such mournful pieces of mirth and merry pieces of sadness, there are few we could submit to behold more patiently than “The Chapter of Accidents.”

The general outline of this play and one or two of the characters are so evidently copied from Terence’s “Adelphi,” that the resemblance will at once occur to the classical reader, though Miss Lee, we dare aver, as little suspected that she had derived her story from Terence, as the closing sentiment of her piece from Virgil, the coincidence in both cases being purely unintentional. The truth is, she read the Latin play through French spectacles, or in other words borrowed some of her materials from “Le Pere de Famille” of Diderot, who had himself made free with the Roman dramatist, and transferred without ceremony to his own production whatever he found adapted to his purpose in the “Adelphi.” With the precise extent of Miss Lee’s obligations to the Frenchman we are not acquainted, nor indeed is it very material to enquire, but she has certainly contrived to produce, *by some means or another*, a very respectable performance. The plot is well-contrived, cleverly conducted, and wrought to a climax in the

last act very dexterously; the characters are happily contrasted, and in no instance greatly out of nature: those of *Woodville*, *Harcourt*, *Cecilia* and *Miss Mortimer* can scarcely fail to interest the spectator's feelings, while those of the *Governor*, *Vane*, *Jacob*, and *Bridget* are as well adapted to amuse his fancy. Of the dialogue it may with justice be said, that if the wit is not of the most sparkling quality, the sentiments are naturally and often elegantly expressed, though the speeches are frequently too long, and the ideas in or two instances border a little upon indecorum,—they do, as it were, “something smack, something grow to, they have a kind of taste;” but these lady-authors seem to have claimed a prescriptive right, from the days of Mesdames Centlivre and Behn, down to those of Mrs. Cowley and Miss Lee, to exercise a vast degree of latitude in their choice of subjects, and mode of handling them. Miss Lee's selection of a story in the present instance we cannot honestly defend upon the score of moral tendency; she wished, she says, “to draw a female heart capable of frailty yet shuddering at vice, and perhaps sufficiently punished by her own feelings,” trusting that the female part of the audience would take warning by her heroine's misfortunes and avoid her errors; but we fear that of the novel-reading sentimental young ladies who witness *Cecilia's* adventures, two-thirds think only of the reward eventually bestowed upon her, without recollecting the humiliating trials she undergoes to arrive at it, and the wholesome expressions of sorrowful self-reproach which the fair writer has taken care to make her utter. 'Tis always a dangerous experiment to place frailty in an interesting point of view, and solicit our compassion for vice, instead of rendering its aspect hateful. We do not, however, deny that Miss Lee has handled a very ticklish subject with infinite address, and that in depicting the power of intellect combined with an amiable disposition to retain possession of a man's heart after desire has been palled by possession, she has displayed much cleverness: we merely question the prudence and good taste of selecting such a topic at all for the basis of a comedy. Every man we think who seriously considers the subject, must admit that female seduction is treated too much as a matter of indifference in this piece: *Cecilia's* fall from virtue is invested with every species of palliation, while *Bridget's* is placed in a directly ludicrous light and made a capital joke of. 'Tis true that *Cecilia's* determination to abandon a course of vicious indulgence commands respect, but would it not have

been better, both in a dramatic and a moral sense, to have demanded our commiseration and esteem for suffering *innocence*?

To the commendations we have betowed upon the characters and language generally, one or two exceptions must be made. *Lord Glenmore's* abrupt offer of marriage to a woman he has not known twenty-four hours is grossly improbable, and though he is unaware that he is addressing his son's mistress, the circumstance unavoidably excites an unpleasant feeling in the mind of the spectator. The *Governor's* behaviour too, upon discovering his supposed daughter's seduction and the total disarrangement of his plans, is extremely singular for a man not devoid of feeling, since he appears to be utterly regardless of the ruin of his child, and alive only to the ridicule the affair will draw upon himself: in striving to render him eccentric the author forgot to make him natural. *Vane*, though a droll dog, is but a bastard descendant of the knavish valets of Farquhar and Congreve, and *Bridget's* dialect is neither that of nature nor of art; a lamer attempt to imitate the language of vulgarity we cannot readily call to mind. *Jacob's* is much better, and he is in sooth the pleasantest fellow of the whole party.

This piece it appears was originally a three-act opera, and was presented in that form to Mr. Harris, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, who, according to Miss Lee's account, retained it a long time in his possession, trifling with her feelings by "supercilious and unmeaning criticisms," and at length suggested that she had better reduce it to an afterpiece, by cutting out the serious portions altogether. This advice, which was perhaps the soundest that could be offered, Miss Lee disdainfully rejected, withdrew her play from his hands, and offered it to Colman, Sen. of the Haymarket theatre; that gentleman recommended her to expand it from a three-act Opera into a five-act comedy, a hint she was induced to listen to; and the drama in its novel form being at length produced, (in August 1780) was received with great applause. Miss Lee soon after published it, with an ill-judged intemperate Preface, in which she incontestably proved the truth of the remark that "hell has no fury like a woman scorn'd," by heaping upon Mr. Harris a variety of most angry invectives for his asserted misconduct, insinuating that it was all owing to her having "neither a prostituted pen nor person to offer him." Mr. Harris was wise enough to laugh at this ebullition of female rage, and showed how

little he regarded such attacks, by bringing forward the comedy at his own theatre. Prefixed to the play were these lines;—

“ To Mrs. P———

Oh, thou, who bad'st me fearless seize the oar,
And launch uncertain on life's flutt'ring sea,
With trembling hand impell'd my bark from shore
While wond'ring at my own temerity;

Nameless, as are thy merits, still remain,
Yet let thy heart appropriate all its dues,
And oh ! whate'er th' event, do thou retain
The tender titles of my friend and muse !

Should Fortune's fav'rites, circling, close her throne,
And Fame's loud trump be mute to me alone,
The pity of the world I can return,
And still at unsuccessful fiction spurn ;
While Heav'n's supreme indulgence gives to me
Its charms combin'd and realiz'd in thee !”

Miss Lee, who we believe is still living, is the daughter of Mr. John Lee, an actor and dramatist, and was born about the middle of the last century. Her father in the course of his life performed at most of the theatres in Great Britain and Ireland, and, says the “ Biographia Dramatica,” if his own description of himself were to be credited, was entitled to rank with the most excellent actors of the present or past times. His talents, however, were hardly above mediocrity; and though by dint of puffing he often obtruded himself on the stage in London, he was always treated with coldness and neglect. It is remarkable that he was scarcely ever connected with any theatre, without quarrelling with the manager, or some person belonging to it; and perhaps there were more appeals to the public, in print, from him on his paltry disputes, than from any other person that could be pointed out.

Miss Lee appears to have inherited in some degree the petulance and vanity of her parent, but the affection she displayed towards him

was most exemplary, and we are told, in the before-mentioned intemperate preface, that her first efforts in dramatic composition were made within the rules of a prison, whither she accompanied her father, who for a time was confined there, through "the perjury of an enemy and the injustice of a judge." Here she conceived the design of the "Chapter of Accidents," and Mr. Lee on his liberation being engaged at Covent Garden Theatre, she submitted her piece to Mr. Harris, which led to the misunderstanding already described. The promise displayed by her first composition, induced the town to form sanguine anticipations of future amusement from her productions in this line of writing, but these expectations were destined to be disappointed. An interval of about twenty years elapsed ere Miss Lee again solicited the attention of the public as a dramatist, when an indifferent Tragedy from her pen, called "Almeyda, Queen of Granada," was produced at Drury Lane Theatre, and dragged its slow length along for four nights only, amid the yawns and murmurs of the few spectators who after the first evening assembled to witness its performance. This was in 1796, and the lady was heard of no more as a writer for the Stage till 1807, when she presented to the Drury Lane managers a Comedy named "Assignment;" but the audience, thoroughly disgusted with its utter want of plot, character, humour, and probability, expressed their sentiments so vehemently, that the stage-manager was compelled to make his appearance in the midst of the 4th Act, to beseech them to hear the piece patiently to the conclusion; the thing was at once withdrawn, and Miss Lee has never ventured within the theatrical arena again. The little dramatic talent she displayed in her last two attempts almost warrants a suspicion that she was somewhat more indebted to the assistance of others while composing this comedy, than she thought proper to acknowledge.

In other branches of composition, Miss Lee has been more successful. The "*Canterbury Tales*," which are understood to be the joint production of herself and her sister Harriet, are universally known and admired. She has also aided her sister in one or two more works, and has published "*The Recess*," a Novel, 1783; "*The Hermit's Tale*," a Poem, 1787; "*The Life of a Lover*," a Novel, 1804; and "*Ormond, or the Debauchee*," a Novel, 1810. In conjunction with her sister she for a long period conducted a boarding-school, at Bath, with considerable ability and reputation.

P. P.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY GEORGE COLMAN, ESQ.

SPOKEN BY MR. PALMER.

Long has the passive stage, howe'er absurd,
Been rul'd by *names*, and govern'd by a *word*.
Some poor *cant term*, like magic spells can awe,
And bind our realms, like a dramatic law.
When Fielding, Humour's fav'rite child, appear'd,
Low was the word,—a word each author fear'd !
T'ill chas'd at length by pleasantry's bright ray,
Naturę and mirth resum'd their legal sway,
And Goldsmith's genius bask'd in open day.

No beggar, howe'er poor, a cur can lack ;
Poor bards, of critic curs, can keep a *pack*.
One yelper silenc'd, twenty barkers rise,
And with new *howls* their *snarlings* still disguise.
Low banish'd, the word *sentiment* succeeds ;
And at that shrine the modern playwright bleeds.
Hard fate ! but let each would-be critic know,
That *sentiments* from genuine *feelings* flow :
Critics in vain declaim, and write, and rail,
Nature, eternal Nature ! will prevail.
Give me the bard, who makes me laugh and cry,
Diverts and moves, and all—I scarce know why !
Untaught by commentators, French or Dutch,
Passion still answers to th' electric touch.
Reason, like Falstaff, claims, when all is done,
The honours of the field already won.

To-night, our author's is a mix'd intent—
Passion and humour—*low* and *sentiment* :

PROLOGUE.

Smiling in tears—a serio-comic play—
Sunshine and show'r—a kind of April-day!
A Lord, whose pride is in his honour plac'd;
A Governor, with av'rice not disgrac'd;
An humble Priest! a Lady, and a Lover
So full of virtue, *some of it runs over.*
No temporary touches, no allusions
To camps, reviews, and all our late confusions;
No personal reflections, no sharp satire,
But a mere chapter from the book of Nature.
Wrote by a woman too! the muses now
Few liberties to naughty men allow;
But, like old maids on earth, resolv'd to vex,
With cruel coyness treat the other sex.

Costume.

GOVERNOR HARCOURT.

Grey regimental suit.

CAPTAIN HARCOURT.

Scarlet regimentals.

WOODVILLE.

Blue coat, white waistcoat, and breeches.

VANE.

Country coat, flowered waistcoat, and leathern breeches.

LORD GLENMORE.

Dress suit.

GREY.

Black ibid.

JACOB.

Old fashioned suit of livery.

SERVANTS.

Liveries.

CECILIA.

First Dress.—White gauze, trimmed with white satin.—Second Dress.—Black crape.

MISS MORTIMER.

Pink gauze, trimmed with white satin.

BRIDGET.

First Dress.—Open coloured gown, pink stuff petticoat, and white apron.—Second Dress.—White, trimmed with roses, blue scarf, and flowers in the head.

MRS. WARNER.

Brown round gown and muslin apron.

Persons Represented.

As originally acted.

<i>Lord Glenmore</i>	Mr. Bensley.
<i>Governor Harcourt</i>	Mr. Wilson.
<i>Woodville</i>	Mr. Palmer.
<i>Captain Harcourt</i>	Mr. Bannister, Jun.
<i>Grey</i>	Mr. Aickin.
<i>Vane</i>	Mr. La Mash.
<i>Jacob</i>	Mr. Edwin.
<i>Cecilia</i>	Miss Farren.
<i>Miss Mortimer</i>	Mrs. Cuyler.
<i>Mrs. Warner</i>	Mrs. Love.
<i>Bridget</i>	Mrs. Wilson.

Drury-lane, 1816. Covent-garden, 1791

<i>Lord Glenmore</i>	Mr. R. Phillips.	Mr. Aickin.
<i>Governor Harcourt</i>	Mr. Downton.	Mr. Wilson.
<i>Woodville</i>	Mr. Wallack.	Mr. Holman.
<i>Captain Harcourt</i>	Mr. S. Penley.	Mr. Davies.
<i>Grey</i>	Mr. Powell.	Mr. Hull.
<i>Vane</i>	Mr. Harley.	Mr. Bernard.
<i>Jacob</i>	Mr. Oxberry.	Mr. Blanchard.
<i>Cecilia</i>	Miss Murray.	Miss Brunton.
<i>Miss Mortimer</i>	Miss Boyce.	Miss Chapman.
<i>Mrs. Warner</i>	Miss Tidswell.	Mrs. Davenet.
<i>Bridget</i>	Miss Kelly.	Mrs. Wells.

SCENE—London.

Time—Twenty-four Hours.

THE
CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Hall.*

Enter VANE, L.H. in a riding-dress, followed by a FOOTMAN.

Vane. Run and tell Mrs. Warner my lord is at hand; and bid the butler send me a bottle of hock.—
[*Servant crosses, and exits, R.H.—Vane throws himself along the hall chairs, wiping his forehead.*]
—Phew! the months have jumbled out of their places, and we have July in September.

Enter MRS. WARNER, R.H.—She starts, greatly surprised at Vane's affected manner; then very formally addresses him.

Mrs. W. Servant, Mr. Vane.

Vane. Ah, my dear creature! how have you done these fifty ages?



THE CHAPTER

Mrs. W. Why, methinks you are grown might grand, or you would have come to the still-room to ask. Will you choose any chocolate?

Vane. Why, don't you see I am dead, absolutely dead; and, if you was to touch me, I should shake to mere dust, like an Egyptian mummy. Because it was not provoking enough to lounge away a whole summer in the country, here am I driven up to town, as if the devil was at my heels, in the shape of our hopeful heir; who has neither suffered my lord nor me to rest one moment, through his confounded impatience to see his uncle.

Mrs. W. Umph!—he'll have enough of the old gentleman presently. He is the very moral of my poor dear lady, his sister, who never was at peace herself nor suffered any one else to be so. Such a house as we have had ever since he came! Why, he is more full of importance and airs than a bailiff in possession, and hectors over Miss Mortimer, till she almost keeps her chamber to avoid him.

Vane. Hates Miss Mortimer! Why, here'll be the devil to pay about her, I suppose!

Mrs. W. Hate her? ay, that he does. He looks as if he could have killed her, the moment she came down to see him; and got into his chamber presently after, where he sends for me. "Who is this young woman, Mrs. What's-your-name?" says he.—"Why, sir," says I, "she is the orphan of a Colonel Mortimer, whose intimacy with my lord," says I,—"Pho, pho," says he, "all that I know, woman: what does she do in this house?" says he, his face wrinkling all over like cream when it's skimming.—"Why, sir," says I, "her father unluckily died just before the duke and his brother, and so could not leave her one shilling of all that fine fortune; and so my lord intends to marry her to Mr. Woodville," says I:—"He does," cries he, "heaven be praised, I'm come in time to manage that dainty project, however. You may go, woman."

OF ACCIDENTS.

and tell miss I don't want any thing more to-night." So up goes I to Miss Mortimer, and tells her all this. Lord, how glad she was, to find he intended to break the match, though she can't guess what he means.

Vane. Upon my soul, I think it is full as hard to guess what she means. What the devil, will not my lord's title, fortune, and only son, be a great catch for a girl without a friend or a shilling?

Mrs. W. Ay; but I could tell you a little story would explain all. You must know—

(Sits down.—A loud knocking, R.H.)

Vane. (Starts up.) Zounds, here's my lord!

[Exeunt, confusedly, L.H.]

SCENE II.—*An Anti-chamber.*

Enter LORD GLENMORE, L.H. and the GOVERNOR, R.H. meeting; the latter hobbling.

Lord G. You are welcome to England, brother! I am sorry your native air pays you so ill a compliment, after sixteen years' absence.

Gov. Faith, my lord, and so am I too, I promise you: I put up with these things tolerably well in the Indies, I did not go there to be happy; but, after all my labours, to find I have just got the money when it is out of my power to enjoy it, is a cursed stroke:—like a fine ship of war, I am only come home to be dismasted and converted into an hospital. However, I am glad you hold it better: I don't think you looked as well when we parted. My sister, poor Susan! she is gone too.—Well, we can never live a day the longer for thinking on't. Where's Frank? Is he still the image of his mother?

Lord G. Just as you left him, but that the innocence of the boy is dignified by the knowledge of the man.

Gov. He will hardly remember his old uncle!—

did love the rogue, that's the truth on't; and never looked at my money-bags but I thought of him.—However, you have provided him a wife?

Lord G. I have; you saw her on your arrival. Sophia has birth, merit, accomplishments, and wants nothing but money to qualify her for any rank.

Gov. Can she have a worse want on earth? Birth, merit, accomplishments, are the very things that render money more essential.

Lord G. You are too captious, brother!

Gov. And you too placid, brother! If, like me, you had been toiling a third of your days to compass a favourite design, and found it disappointed at the moment you thought it complete, what would even your serene lordship say and do?—Here have I promised myself a son in your's, an heir in your's;—instead of which—

Lord G. His marriage with Miss Mortimer will not make him unworthy either title.

Gov. Never mention her name to me, I beg, my lord!—The wife I would have given him, has beauty without knowing it, innocence without knowing it, because she knows nothing else, and to surprise you farther, forty thousand pounds without knowing it—nay, to bring all your surprises together, is my daughter without knowing it.

Lord G. Your daughter! Why, have you married since my sister's death? your daughter by her you lost before you went abroad.

Gov. Yes, but I shall find her again, I believe.—I know you will call this one of my odd whims, as usual, but we have all some; witness this dainty project of yours; and so I will tell you the truth in spite of that project.—From the very birth of this girl, I saw her mother would spoil her, and, had she lived, proposed kidnapping miss in her infancy.

Lord G. Kidnap your own daughter!—Why, brother, I need only prove this to obtain a commission of lunacy, and shut you up for life.

Gov. Why, though my wife was your lordship's

sister, I will venture to tell you she was plaguy fantastical, and contrived to torment me as much with her virtues, as others by their vices—such a fuss about her delicacy, her sensibility, and her refinement, that I could neither look, move, nor speak, without offending one or the other; and execrated the inventor of the jargon every hour in the four and twenty; a jargon, I resolved my girl should never learn; and heaven no sooner took her mother (heaven be praised for all things!) than I dispatched her draggetailed French governess; made a bonfire of every book on education; whipped miss into a post-chaise, under a pretence of placing her in a nunnery; instead of which I journeyed into Wales, and left her in the care of a poor curate's wife, whose name was up as the best housewife in the whole country: then returned with a solemn history of her death in the small-pox.

Lord G. Well, this indeed astonishing! an admirable tutoress, truly, for my niece!

Gov. Yes, but there's a better jest than that.

Lord G. Indeed!—is that possible?

Gov. How do you think I contrived to make them obey my instructions? I saw they suspected I was some rich humourist, and was afraid they would, after all, make a little bit of a gentlewoman of her, for which reason, except the first year in advance, they never had a single shilling of my money.

Lord G. This is almost incredible! and so you left your only child to the charity of strangers?

Gov. No, no, not so bad as that, neither. You remember my honest servant, Hardy? After the poor fellow's leg was shot off in my tent, I promised him a maintenance; so, entrusting him with the secret, I ordered him to live in the neighbourhood, have an eye on the girl, and claim her if ill-used. Fine accounts I had from him, faith! The old parson and his wife having no children, and not finding any one own her, gave out she was their's, and doated on her; in short, *she is the little wonder of the country; tall as the palm-tree! with cheeks that might shame the draw-*

ing-room, and eyes, will dim the diamonds I have brought over to adorn them. This confounded gout has kept me in continual alarm, or else she should have spoke for herself.

Lord G. Why then does not Hardy bring her up to you?

Gov. Why for two very sufficient reasons.—In the first place, that identical parson paid him the last compliment, that is, buried him a twelvemonth ago; and in the second, they would hardly entrust her to any man but him who delivered her to them. Here was a girl, my lord, to support your title, of which I dare swear you are as fond as ever.

Lord G. I thank your intention, brother; but am far from wishing the chief accomplishments of Woodville's lady should be the making cream cheeses, goats whey, and elder wine.

Gov. Let me tell your lordship, women were never better than when those were their chief accomplishments. But I may be ridiculous my own way, without being singular—Harcourt shall have my girl, and my money too. Cream cheeses, quotha? no, no, making cream faces is an accomplishment which the belles of these days oftener excel in.

Lord G. I would not advise you to publish this opinion, Governor—for though you should call no anger into the cheeks of the ladies, I doubt you would into their hearts.

Gov. But where is this son of your's? sure he has not totally forgot his old uncle?

Lord G. He will be here immediately.

Gov. Nay, I must e'en take an old man's fate, and follow his mistress without complaint.

Lord G. You have no reason for the reproach; this is not his hour for visiting Miss Mortimer.

Gov. Miss Mortimer! Ha, ha, ha! why, do you think I took her for his mistress?—What, I warrant I can tell you news of your own family, though I have hardly been three days in it.—Woodville keeps a girl, and in great splendour! nay, they tell me, that

the unconscionable young rogue encroaches so far on the privilege of threescore, as to intend marrying the slut.

Lord G. You jest, surely? To have my views thus in a moment overturned!—Where does she live?

Gov. Ha, ha, ha!—oh, the difference of those little syllables *me* and *thee*! now you can guess what made me so peevish, I suppose? As to where miss lives, I have not heard; but somewhere near his lodgings. A devilish fine girl she is, by the bye. Ah, I told you, twenty years ago, you would spoil this boy, entirely spoil him.

Lord G. Is this a time for old sayings of twenty years ago? Finish dressing; by that time your nephew will be here, and I shall have reflected on this matter.

Gov. With all my heart. 'Tis but a boyish frolic, and so good morning to you. Here; where's my triumvirate? Pompey, Antony, Cæsar! [*Exit, R.H.*]

Lord G. A boyish frolic, truly!—many a foolish fellow's life has been marked by such a boyish frolic!—But her residence is the first object of my enquiry.—Vane!

Enter VANE, L.H.

Is not my son come?

Vane. This moment, my lord; and walks till the Governor is ready.

Lord G. Vane!—I have deserved you should be attached to me, and I hope you are?

Vane. My lord!—What the devil is he at? (*Aside.*)

Lord G. This strange old Governor has alarmed me a good deal—you are more likely to know, whether with reason, than I can be. Have you heard any thing important of my son lately?

Vane. Never, my lord.

Lord G. Not that he keeps a mistress?—What does the fool smile at?

Vane. I did not think that any thing important, my lord.

Lord G. I do, sir—and am told a more important thing ; that he even thinks of marrying her. Now, though I cannot credit this, I would choose to know what kind of a creature she is. Could not you assume a clownish disguise, and scraping an acquaintance with her people, learn something of her character and designs?

Vane. Doubtless, to oblige your lordship, I could do such a thing :—but, if Mr. Woodville's sharp eyes (and love will render them still sharper) should discover me, I might chance to get a good drubbing in the character of a spy.

Lord G. Oh, it is very improbable he should suspect you—at the worst, name your employer, and your bones are safe.—The office, perhaps, is not very agreeable, but I impose few such on you : execute it well, and you shall remember it with pleasure—I will detain Woodville till you are ready ; and, as I doubt not that his next visit will be to this creature, by following him you will find out where she lives. Prepare then as quick as possible, and send me word when you are ready ; for, till then, I will not suffer him to depart.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Vane. A pretty errand this, his formal lordship has honoured me with !—Um ! if I betray him, shall I not get more by it ? ay, but our heir is such a sentimental spark, that, when his turn was served, he might betray me.—Were he one of our hare-um, skare-um, good-natured, good-for-nothing fellows, it would go against my conscience to do him an ill turn. I believe I stand well in my lord's will, if Counsellor Puzzle may be trusted, (and, when he can get nothing by a lie, perhaps he may tell truth) so, like all thriving men, I will be honest, because it best serves my interest.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

SCENE III.—*A confined Garden.*

WOODVILLE discovered, walking about.

Wood. How tedious is this uncle !—how tedious

every body!—was it not enough to spend two detestable months from my love, merely to preserve the secret, but I must be tantalized with seeing without arriving at her? yet how, when I do see her, shall I appease that affecting pride of a noble heart, conscious too late of its own inestimable value?—Why was I not uniformly just?—I had then spared myself the bitterest of regrets.

Enter CAPTAIN HARCOURT, L.H.

Har. Woodville! how do'st?—Don't you, in happy retirement, pity my Ealing and Acton marches and countermarches, as Foote has it?—But, methinks, thy face is thinner and longer than a forsaken nymph's, who is going through the whole ceremony of nine month's repentance.—What, thou'st fall'n in love?—rustically too?—nay, pr'ythee, don't look so very lamentable!

Wood. Ridiculous! How can we have an eye or ear for pleasure, when our fate hangs over us undecided?

Har. I guess what you mean; but why make mountains of mole-hills? Is the rosy-fisted damsel so obstinately virtuous?

Wood. Imagine a fair favourite of Phœbus in all respects; since, while her face caught his beams, her heart felt his genius! Imagine all the graces hid under a straw hat, and russet gown; imagine—

Har. You have imagined enough of conscience!—and now for a few plain facts, if you please.

Wood. To such a lovely country maid I lost my heart last summer; and soon began to think romances the only histories; and happiness not merely possible in a cottage, but only possible there.

Har. Well; all the philosophers (ancient and modern) would never be able to convince me, a coach was not a mighty pretty vehicle; and the lasses as good-natured in town as country: but pray let us know, why you laid aside the pastoral project of eat-

ing fat bacon and exercising a crook all day, (that thou might'st conclude the evening with the superlative indulgence of a peat-fire and a bed stuffed with straw?

Wood. Why, faith, by persuading the dear girl to share mine.

Har. Oh, now you talk the language of the world : and does that occasion thee such a melancholy face ?

Wood. How ignorant are you both of me and her ! Every moment since I prevailed, has only served to convince me, I can sooner live without every thing else than her ; and this fatal leisure (caused by my absence with my father) she has employed in adding every grace of art to those of nature ; till, thoroughly shocked at her situation, her letters are as full of grief as love, and I dread to hear every hour I have lost her.

Har. I dread much more to hear you have lost yourself. Ah, my dear Woodville, the most dangerous charm of love is, every man conceits no other ever found out his method of loving ; but, take my word for it, your Dolly may be brought back to a milk-maid. Leave her to herself awhile, and she'll drop the celestials, I dare swear.

Wood. She is too noble ; and nothing but the duty I owe to so indulgent a father, prevents me from offering her all the reparation in my power.

Har. A fine scheme, truly !—Why, Woodville, art frantic ?—To predestinate yourself among the horned cattle of Doctors' Commons, and take a wife for the very reason which makes so many spend thousands to get rid of one !

Wood. To withdraw an amiable creature from her duty, without being able to make her happy, is to me a very serious reflection ; nay, I sinned, I may say, from virtue : and, had I been a less grateful son, might have called myself a faultless lover.

Har. Well, well, man ! you are young enough to trust to time, and he does wonders ; above all, shake off this mental lethargy.

Wood. I will endeavour to take your advice.—

Should she fly, I were undone for ever!—but you are no judge of my Cecilia's sincerity. How should you know those qualities which rise with every following hour? Can you think so meanly of me, as that I could be duped by a vulgar wretch? a selfish wanton? oh, no! she possesses every virtue but the one I have robbed her of.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Har. Poor Frank! thy sponsors surely, by intuition, characterized thee when they gave thee that name. Did I love your welfare less, I could soon ease your heart, by acquainting you of my marriage with Miss Mortimer; but now the immediate consequence would be this ridiculous match. How, if I apprize either my lord or the Governor? both obstinate in different ways: I might betray only to ruin him.—A thought occurs; my person is unknown to her—choosing an hour when he is absent, I'll pay her a visit, offer her an advantageous settlement, and learn from her behaviour her real character and intentions.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An elegant Dressing-room, with a toilette richly ornamented. A harpsichord, and a frame with embroidery.*

BRIDGET *discovered, who fetches various small jars with flowers, and talks as she places them.*

Brid. Lord help us!—How fantastical some folks not an hundred miles off are!—If I can imagine what's come to my lady. Here has she been sighing and groaning these two months, because her lover was in the country; and now, truly, she's sighing and groaning because he is come to town.—Such maggots in-

deed !—I might as well have staid in our parish all the days of my life, as to live mew'd up with her in this dear sweet town : I could but have done that with a *vairtuous* lady—although I know she never was at Fox-Hall in all her jaunts, and we two should cut such a figure there !—Bless me ! what's come to the glass ?—(*Settling her dress.*)—Why, sure, it is dull'd with her eternal sighing, and makes me look as frightful as herself !—O ! here she comes, with a face as long and dismal, as if he was going to be married, and to somebody else too.

Enter CECILIA, R.H. who throws herself on the sofa, leaning on her hand.

Cec. What can detain Woodville such an age !—It is an hour at least since he rode by.—Run, Bridget, and look if you can see him through the drawing-room window.

Brid. Yes, madam.

[*Exit, L.H. eyeing her with contempt.*]

Cec. How wearisome is every hour to the wretched—They catch at each future one, merely to while away the present. For, were Woodville here, could he relieve me from the torment of reflection ? or the strong, though silent, acknowledgment my own heart perpetually gives of my error ?

Brid. (*Without.*) Here he comes, ma'am, here he comes !

Cec. Does he ?—Run down then. (*Fluttered.*)

Brid. Dear me, no ; 'tis not, neither.

Re-enter BRIDGET, L.H.

'Tis only the French ambassador's new cook, with his huge bag and long ruffles.

Cec. Blind animal !—Sure nothing is so tormenting as expectation.

Brid. La, ma'am !—any thing will torment one, when one has a mind to be tormented ; which must

be your case, for sartin. What signifies sitting mope, mope, mope, from morning to night?—You'd find yourself a deal better if you went out only two or three times a day.—For a walk, we are next door to the Park, as I may say; and, for a ride, such a dear sweet landau and pretty horses might tempt any one; then, as to company, you'll say, "A fig for your starched ladies, who owe their virtue to their ugliness!"—mine is very much at your service. (*Curtseys.*)

Cec. How could I endure this girl did I not know that her ignorance exceeds even her impertinence?—I have no pleasure in going abroad.

Brid. Oh la, ma'am! how should you know till you try? Sure every body must wish to see and be seen.—Then there's such a delightful hurricane; all the world are busy, though most are doing nothing;—to splash the mob, and drive against the people of quality!—Oh, give me a coach, and London for ever and ever!—You could but lock yourself up, were you as old and ugly as gay Lady Grizzle, at next door.

Cec. Had I been so, I had continued happy.

Brid. La, ma'am, don't ye talk so purphanely—Happy to be old and ugly?—Or, I'll tell you what, as you don't much seem to fancy going out, suppose you were to come down now and then, (you know we have a pure large hall) and take a game of romps with us? If you were once to see our Jacob hunt the slipper, you would die with laughing!—Madam Frisk, my last mistress, used, as soon as ever master was gone (and indeed he did not trouble her much with his company) to run down, draw up her brocaded niggled-gee, and fall to play at some good fun or other!—Dear heart, we were as merry then as the day was long!—I am sure I have never been half so happy since!

Cec. I cannot possibly imitate the model you propose; but though I don't choose to go abroad, you may.

Brid. I don't love to go much among the mobility, neither. If indeed, madam, next winter you'd give

me some of your tickets, I would fain go to a masquerade, (it vexes me to see um stick in the thing-um-bobs for months together) and Mrs. Trim promises me the lent of a *Wenus's* dress, which, she says, I shall cut a figure in. Now, ma'am, if I had but some diamonds (for beggars wear diamonds there, they say) who knows but I might make my fortune, like you?

Cec. Mar it, much rather, like me.—That is no place for girls of your station, which exposes you to so much insult.

Brid. Ah, let me alone, madam, for taking care of number one. I was never afeard but once in my whole life, and that ware of granfar's ghost; for he always hated I, and used to walk (poor soul!) in our barken, for all the world like an ass with a tye-wig on.

(*Knocking hard*)

Cec. Hark! that sure is Woodville's knock! Fly, and see!—(*Walks eagerly to the door, and returns as eagerly.*)—Alas! is this my repentance? Dare I sin against my judgment?

Enter WOODVILLE, L.H.

Wood. My Cecilia! My soul!—Have I at last the happiness of beholding you?—You know me too well to imagine I would punish *myself* by a moment's voluntary delay.

Cec. Oh, no; it is not that—

(*Both sit down on the sofa.*)

Wood. Say you are glad to see me; afford me one kind word to atone for your cold looks!—Are you not well?

Cec. Rather say I am not happy.—My dear Woodville, I am an altered being!—Why have you reduced me to shrink thus in your presence?—Oh! why have you made me unworthy of yourself?

(*Leans against his shoulder, weeping.*)

Wood. Cruel girl!—Is this my welcome?—When did I appear to think you so?

Cec. Tell me when any one else will think me otherwise.

Wood. Will you never be above so narrow a prejudice?—Are we not the whole world to each other?—Nay, dry your tears! allow me to dry them;—(*Kisses her cheek.*)—What is there in the reach of love or wealth I have not sought to make you happy?

Cec. That which is the essence of all enjoyments—innocence!—Oh, Woodville! you knew not the value of the heart, whose peace you have destroyed. My sensibility first ruined my virtue, and then my repose. But though, for you, I consented to abandon an humble happy home, to embitter the age of my venerable father, and bear the contempt of the world, I can never support my own!—My heart revolts against my situation, and hourly bids me renounce a splendour, which only renders guilt more despicable.—(*Rises.*)—I meant to explain this hereafter; but the agitation of my mind obliged me to lighten it immediately.

Wood. Is your affection then already extinct?—For sure it must, when you can resolve to torture me thus.

Cec. Were my love extinct, I might sink into a mean content! Oh, no!—'Tis to that alone I owe my resolution.

Wood. Can you then plunge me into despair?—So young, so lovely too!—Oh! where could you find so safe an asylum as my heart?—Whither could you fly?

Cec. I am obliged to you, sir, for the question; but who is it has made me thus destitute?—I may retain your protection, indeed, but at what price?

Wood. Give me but a little time, my love! I am equally perplexed between my father and my uncle; each of whom offers me a wife I can never love. Suffer them to defeat each other's schemes! Let me, if possible, be happy without a crime; for I must think it one, to grieve a parent hitherto so indulgent. I will not put any thing in competition with your peace; and long for the hour when the errors of the lover will be absorbed in the merits of the husband.

Cec. No, Woodville!—That was, when innocent,

as far above my hopes, as it is now beyond my wishes. I love you too sincerely to reap any advantage from so generous an error: yet you at once flatter and wound my heart, in allowing me worthy such a distinction; but love cannot subsist without esteem; and how should I possess yours, when I have lost even my own?

Wood. It is impossible you should ever lose either, while so deserving of both. I am obliged to return directly, but will hasten to you the very first moment. When we meet again, it must be with a smile, remember!

Cec. It will, when we meet again. Oh, how those words oppress me!—(*Aside.*)—But do not regulate your conduct by mine, nor make me an argument with yourself for disobeying my lord; for here I solemnly swear never to accept you without the joint consent of both our fathers; and that I consider as an eternal abjuration! But, may the favoured woman you are to make happy, have all my love without my weakness!

[*Exit, in tears, R.H.*]

Wood. Disinterested, exalted girl! Why add such a needless bar? for is it possible to gain my father's consent? And yet, without her, life would be insupportable!—The censures of the world! What is that world to me?—Were I weak enough to sacrifice her to the erroneous judgment of the malicious and unfeeling, what does it offer to reward me?—Commendations I can never deserve, and riches I can never enjoy.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

SCENE II.—*A Street before Cecilia's House.*

JACOB opens the door and lets out *WOODVILLE*, who passes over the stage to *R.H.* *Jacob* remains with his hands in his pockets, whistling.—*VANE* enters, disguised, with a basket of game in his hand, *R.H.*
U.E.

Vane. So, there he goes, at last. I may open the attack without fear of a discovery, since our hopeful

heir will hardly return directly.—This intelligence of my landlord's at the Blue Posts has made the matter much easier.—Um, a good subject.—Sure I ought to know that bumkin'a face!—As I live, my play-fellow at the parish school, Jacob Gawky!—Now for a touch of the old dialect.—D'ye hire, young mon?—Prey, do ye know where one Bet Dowson do live?

Jac. Noa, not I.

Vane. Hay!—Why, zure as two-pence, thou beest Jacob Gawky!

Jac. Odsbodlikins! zo I be, indeed!—But who beest hee?

Vane. What, doost not know thy ould zkoolfellow Wull, mun?

Jac. Hay!—What—Wull?—Od rabbit it, if I ben't desperate glad to zee thee. Where doost live now, mun?

Vane. Down at hoame, in our parish. I be coomed up with Zur Isaac Promise, to be meade an excoise-man.

Jac. Thee'st good luck, faith! Wish, no odds to thee, my fortin were as good! But thee'dst always a mortal good notion of wroiting, and cyphers, while I don't know my own neame when I do zee it. What didst leave zea for?

Vane. Why, I ware afraid I should be killed before I comed to be a great mon:—but what brought thee into this soine house?

Jac. Fortin, Wull, fortin.—Didst thee know Nan o' th' mill?

Vane. Noa, not I.

Jac. Od rabbit it! I thought every muortal zoul knawd zhe.—Well, Nan and I ware such near neighbours, thare ware only a barn between us; zhe ware a desprate smart lass, that's the truth on't; and I had half a moind to teake to feyther's business, and marry zhe: but, ecod; the simpletony grewed so fond, that some how or other, I ware tired first! when, behold you, zquire takes a fancy to me, and made I cuome and live at the hall; and as my head run all on tuown,

when aw comed up to London, aw brought I wi' un; zo I thought to get rid that way of the bullocking of Nan.

Vane. But, Jacob, how didst get into thic soine house?

Jac. Dang it, doan't I zeay I'll tell thee present.—Zoa, as I ware zaying,—one holiday, I went to zee thick there church, wi' the top like a huge punch-bowl turned auver; and, dang it, who should arrive in the very nick, but madam Nan! Well, huome comes I, as merry as a cricket; zquire caals for I in a muortal hurry; when who should I zee, but madam Nan on her marrowbones, a croying for dear loife!—Dang it, I thought at first I should ha' zwounded; zo a made a long zarmant about 'ducing a poor girl, and zaid I should zertainly go to the divil for it, and then turned I off. But the best fun is to come, mun: rabbit me if aw did not teake Nan into keeping himself, and zhe do flaunt it about, as soine as a duchess!

Vane. A mighty religious moral gentleman, truly! —(*Aside.*)—Well, how came you to this place?

Jac. Why, Meay-day, walking in Common-garden to smell the pozeys, who should I zee but our Bridget! I was muortal glad to zee her, you must needs think, and zhe got I thic here place.

Vane. Wounds! dost live wi' a lord in this soine house?

Jac. Noa; a leady, you fool! but zuch a leady, zuch a dear, easy, good-natured creature! zhe do never say noa, let we do what we wull.

Vane. Now to the point.—(*Aside.*)—Is your lady married?

Jac. Noa; but she's as good:—and what's think, mun?—to a lord's zon!—though if a ware a king, aw would not be too good for zhe. A muortal soine comely man too, who do love her, as aw do the eyes in his head. Cousin Bridget do tell I, she zee'd a letter where aw do zay aw wull ha' her any day of the week, whatever do come o' th' next. Why, I warrant, they have 'pointed wedding day!

Vane. The devil they have? My lord will go mad at this news. (*Aside.*)

Jac. Lauk a deazy! how merry we will be on that day!—Wo't come and junket wi' us?

Vane. Yes, yes: I shall certainly make one among you,—either then or before.—(*Aside.*)—But now I must go and give this geame to zquire—zquire—what the dickens be his neame! I do always forget it.—There zhould be a ticket somewhere:—zoa—rabbit me, if some of your London fauk ha' no' cut it off, out o' fun!

Jac. Ha, ha, ha! ecod, nothing more likelier.—(*Both laugh foolishly.*)—The rum people be zo zharp as needles.—But there's no pleace like it, for all that; I be set upon living and dying in it.

Vane. Now to secure my return, if necessary.—(*Aside.*)—I'll tell thee what, Jacob; seeing as how I ha' lost thic there direction, do thee teake the basket: 'tis only a present of geame from the parson o' our parish; and, if zo be I can't find the gentleman, why, 'tis honestly mine. Meay be I'll come and teake a bit o' supper wi ye.

Jac. Wull ye indeed! dang it, that's clever; and then you'll see our Bridget. She's a muortal smart lass, I promise ye: and, meay be, may'st get a peap at my leady, who's desperate handsome!—Good bye t'ye.—Bridget's zo comical!—Odd rabbit it, we'll be main merry. [*Exit, into house, R.H.*]

Vane. Thus far I have succeeded to admiration.—Our young heir has really a mind to play the fool, and marry his mistress; though, faith, marrying his own does not seem very inexcusable, when so many of his equals modestly content themselves with the cast-offs of half their acquaintance. [*Exit, L.H.*]

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in Cecilia's House.*

Enter BRIDGET, L.H.

Brid. So, just the old story again!—crying, crying

for ever!—Lord, if I was a man, I should hate such a whimpering. What would she have, I wonder?—To refuse such a handsome, genteel, good-natured man! And, I'll be sworn, he offered to marry her; for I listened with all my ears. Oh, that he had me now! I should become my own coach, purdigiously, that's a sure thing.—Hay, who knocks?

Enter JACOB, L.H.

Jac. A young mon do want my leady.

Brid. A man! What sort of a man?

Jac. Why, a mon,—like—just such another as I.

Brid. No, no, no; that's not so easy to find. What can any man want with her? Shew him in here, Jacob.

Jac. (*Going, returns in great glee.*) When shall we have the wedding, Bridget?

Brid. We shall have a burying first, I believe.

Jac. Od rabbit it! we won't be their seconds there, faith! [*Exit, L.H.*]

Brid. Now, if he mistakes me for my lady, I shall find out what he wants.

Enter CAPTAIN HARCOURT, disguised, with JACOB, L.H.

Har. (*Surveying her.*) Is that your lady?

Jac. He, he, he! Lauk, zur, doan't you know that's our Bridget?

Brid. So, deuce on him, there's my whole scheme spoilt!—My lady, sir, is engaged; but, if you tell me your business, it will do just as well.

Har. For yourself it may, child!

(*Chucks her under the chin.*)

Brid. What, you belong to Mr. Gargle, the apothecary? or come from the jeweller on Ludgate-hill? or have a letter from——

Har. (*Interrupting her.*) The very person; you have hit it. And now, do me the favour to tell your

lady, a *stranger* wishes to speak to her on particular business.

Brid. Very well, sir:—was ever handsome man so crabbed!

(*Aside.*)

Har. Egad, if the mistress have half so much tongue as the maid, Woodville may catch me in the midst of my first speech.—Now for my credentials:—and here she comes!—A lovely girl, indeed! I can scarce blame Frank, for she awes *me*.

Enter CECILIA, R.H. followed officiously by BRIDGET.

Cec. I was informed, sir, you had particular business with me.

Har. I took the liberty, madam,—I say, madam, I—

Cec. As I have neither friends or relations in London,—(*Sighs.*)—I am at a loss to guess—

Har. What I would communicate, madam, requires secrecy.

Cec. Bridget, go where I ordered you just now.

Brid. Yes, madam:—but if I an't even with you for this—

[*Exit, L.H.*]

Cec. I complied with your request, sir, without enquiring the motive; because you, I think, *can* have only one. My father, if I may trust my heart, has made you his messenger to an unwilling offender.

Har. Pardon me, madam; but I refer to this.

Cec. (*Reads.*) *Madam,—Being certainly informed Mr. Woodville is on the point of marrying a lady chosen by his friends, when it is presumed you will be disengaged, a nobleman of rank and estate, above what he can ever possess, is thus early in laying his heart and fortune at your feet, lest some more lucky rival should anticipate him. The bearer is authorized to disclose all particulars, and offer you a settlement worthy your acceptance. Deign, madam, to listen to him on the subject, and you will find the unknown lover as generous, and not less constant, than Woodville.—Good heavens! to what an insult have I exposed myself.*

(She bursts into tears, and sinks, into a chair, Without minding Harcourt, who watches her with irresolution.)

Har. What can I think?—there is an air of injured delicacy in her, which teaches me to reproach myself for a well-meant deceit.—*(Aside.)*—If, madam,—

Cec. I had forgot this wretch.—*(Rises.)*—Return, sir, to your vile employer: tell him, whoever he is, I am too sensible of the insult, though not entitled to resent it:—tell him I have a heart above my situation, and that he has only had the barbarous satisfaction of adding another misery to those which almost overwhelmed me before.

Har. Hear me, madam, I conjure you.

Cec. Never! a word would contaminate me.

(Struggling to get off.)

Har. Nay, you shall.—You do not know half the good consequences of this letter: I am the friend, the relation of Woodville; my name, Harcourt.

Cec. Is it possible *he* should be so cruel, so unjust—

Har. He is neither cruel nor unjust, but only unfortunate. Hear: he designs to marry you; this I learnt from himself only this morning. As a proof of my sincerity, I will own, I doubted your right to that mark of his esteem, and made this trial in consequence. Pleased to find you worthy of his rank, I feel shocked at reminding you, you ought not to share it. But, madam, if you truly love him, you cannot wish that, to be just to you, he should be unjust to those who have a prior right over him.—This shall positively be my last effort.

(Aside.)

Cec. A motive like yours, sir, will excuse any thing. How little my happiness, honour, or interest, ever weighed against his, need not be repeated. Far be it from me *now* to disgrace him: he is apprized of my invincible objections to a match which will never take place. May he form a happier, while I, by a voluntary poverty, expiate my offence.

Har. Ma—ma—what the devil is it chokes me so? —*I am struck with your sentiments, and must find you a proper asylum.*—The moment I saw you, I had

hopes such manners could not veil an immoral heart. I have proved your sincerity, and owe a reparation to your delicacy. The proposed bride of Woodville is every way worthy that distinction; nor am I without hopes even *she* will be prevailed on to protect you.—But I must not leave a doubt of my sincerity:—do you know Miss Mortimer?

Cec. I have seen the lady, sir. But dare I credit my senses?—has heaven formed two such hearts, and for me?

Har. With her, your story will be buried for ever: and, I think, the sooner you disappear, the more easily will you prevent Woodville's disobedience, I will open the affair to Miss Mortimer directly; and, if she acquiesces, desire her to call for you in person, to prevent the possibility of any artifice.

Cec. He, who inspired such sentiments, alone can reward them! Oh, sir, you have raised a poor desponding heart; but it shall be the business of my future life to deserve those favours I can never half repay.

Har. I find, by punishing me with acknowledgments, you are resolved to be obliged to me. The time is too precious to be wasted on such trifles. At seven, you shall have certain intelligence of my success. Employ the interim to the best advantage, and hope every thing from daring to deserve well. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Cec. Astonishing interposition of heaven!—Hope! what have I to hope?—But, let the consciousness of acting rightly, support me in the sad moment of renouncing Woodville; and, in him, all that rendered life desirable. [*Exit, R.H.*]

SCENE IV.—*Lord Glenmore's House.*

Enter, LORD GLENMORE and VANE, R.H.

Lord G. And are you sure of all this?

Vane. Absolutely, my lord: I have known the

bumpkin, her footman, from the height of his own club.

Lord G. What a cursed infatuation!—I know not what to resolve on.

Vane. If I may be permitted to advise, my lord—

Lord G. And who asked your advice, sir?

Vane. You have, my lord, formerly.

Lord G. Take care you stay till I do! Leave me, sir.

Vane. If you don't like my advice, I shall give you my opinion very shortly.—A crusty crab!

[*Exit, muttering, R.H.*]

Lord G. This is the certain consequence of entrusting low people; and yet there is no doing without them. I can never master my feelings enough to speak properly to Woodville on the subject, therefore must fix on some other method.—(*Pauses.*)—That's a sure one, and falls heavy on the artful aspiring creature only.—*Vane!*

Re-enter VANE, R.H.

Could you procure me a travelling chaise and four stout fellows immediately?

Vane. To be sure, my lord; I can order a chaise at any inn, if you choose it.

Lord G. Pho, pho!—Do what I have ordered, and wait near the Horse-guards in about an hour; when I shall seize this insolent baggage, and convey her out of my son's reach. You gave me a high-flown account of her; and, as you are a smart young fellow, and she must at least be pretty, if we can contrive to frighten her into taking you as a husband, it will end all my fears, and shall be the making of your fortune.

Vane. 'Gad, I like the project well. A handsome wife is the best bait, when we fish for preferment:—and this gives me a double claim both on father and son.—(*Aside.*)—Nothing but the profound respect I have for your lordship, could induce me to think of

this: though born without rank or fortune, I have a soul, my lord,—

Lord G. Come, come, my good lad; I guess what you would say: but we have no time for speeches. I have set my heart on the success of this project; and you shall find your interest in indulging me.

[*Exeunt, Lord Glenmore L.H. and Vane R.H.*]

SCENE V.—*Miss Mortimer's Apartment.*

Enter CAPTAIN HARCOURT, L.H. meeting Miss MORTIMER, R.H.

Har. If I were to judge of your temper by your looks, my dear, I should say it was uncommonly sweet this morning.

Miss M. A truce with compliments; I must, in reason, renounce dear flattery after marriage.

Har. To flattery you never paid court; but the language of the heart and the world will, sometimes, resemble. I ought, however, to praise your temper, for I am come to try it, and give you a noble opportunity of exerting its benevolence.

Miss M. A benevolence you certainly doubt by this studied eulogium.

Har. I might, did I not know it well.—In short, my love, I have taken the strangest step this morning—

Miss M. What step, for heaven's sake?

Har. In regard to a lady.—

Miss M. Not another wife, I hope?

Har. No—only a mistress.—

Miss M. Oh, a trifle! a trifle!

Har. You may laugh, madam, but I am serious; in plain English, Woodville has a mistress he dotes on so madly, as even to intend marrying her. Imagining her, like most of her stamp, only an artful interested creature, I paid her a visit as a stranger, with an offer which must have unveiled her heart, had it been base; but I found her, on the contrary, a truly,

noble-minded girl, and far above her present situation, which she earnestly wishes to quit. In short, my dear, I thought it prudent to part them ; and, in your name, offered her an asylum.

Miss M. In my name ! you amaze me, Mr. Harcourt ! Would you associate your wife with a kept mistress ? bring such an acquisition into the house of Lord Glenmore, and deprive Woodville of, perhaps his only reason for not interfering with us ?—Do you think I credit this sudden acquaintance ?

Har. I deceived myself, I find ; I thought you above such low suspicion, that you could make distinctions.

Miss M. Yes, yes, I can make distinctions more clearly than you wished. You must excuse my interference in this affair, sir ; and let me hint to you, that your own will do as little credit to your heart as to your understanding.

Har. Mightily well, madam ; go on ! Settle this with respect to yourself, but do not be concerned about me, for, in one word, if you cannot resolve on protecting this poor unfortunate, I will !

Miss M. (Aside.) That must not be ; yet his warmth alarms me.—Nay but, my dear, think deliberately.—Supposing her all you say, the world judges by actions, not thoughts, and will bury her merit in her situation.

Har. It is that cruel argument perpetuates error in so many of your frail sex ? be the first to rise above it. That you are in Lord Glenmore's house will be your justification, both to the world and himself ; for, what but a generous motive can actuate you ? In my eyes, my dear Sophia, virtue never looks so lovely as when she stretches out her hand to the fallen.

Miss M. Oh, Harcourt ! I am ashamed of my suspicion ; I ought to have known all the candour and generosity of your heart, and received, in a moment, the unhappy woman it patronized ;—yet, at this crisis in our own affairs, to run the chance of farther exasperating my benefactor—

Har. I am not to learn, that friendship and love have been mere masks to fraud and folly in the great world ; no one would blame me, were I to suffer Woodville to ruin himself, as the shortest way of fixing my own fortune, and obtaining my lord's approbation of your choice. But I know not how it happened, that when a mere boy, I took it into my head, truth was as much to the purpose as lying ; and as I never got into more scrapes than others, why, I still pursue my system, and prefer honour to art.—Then, if we fail, we have something better to console us than a pond or a pistol ; and, if we succeed, what is there wanting to our happiness ?

Miss M. And how do you mean to manage her escape ?

Har. That, my dearest, is the difficulty. I found she had seen you, and therefore was obliged to satisfy her of my honour, by assuring her you would call for her in person.

Miss M. Very well ; we must carefully watch our opportunity. You dine here—the word of command you are accustomed to obey, but you must now become obedient to the look ; for, you know, I have my difficulties, however strong my desire of obliging you.

[*Exeunt*, R.H.]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Hall.*

Enter VANE, L.H. looking about.

Vane. Hey-day ! sure his old-fashioned lordship has not employed two of us on one errand !—An old man has been hovering about madam's house, and he

followed me here, without my knowing what to do of him! However, ears befriend me!

(Retires, L.H.U.E. listen)

Enter GOVERNOR, R.H. his black SERVANTS following him at a distance.

Gov. Here, Antony, Pompey, Cæsar! you dogs be ready to attend my lord and me on a little expedition. No; no flambeaux, boobies!—the chaste Miss Diana will surely take a spiteful pleasure in lighting us to catch another kind of miss.—And, do ye hear? not one syllable of the when, where, or how; except you intend to dangle on one string, like a bunch of black grapes.
(Talks to them apart.)

Enter GREY, L.H.

Grey. It is here, I am at length informed, the father of this abandoned seducer resides. Yet, what redress can poverty hope from pride?—Surely, however, for his own sake, he will assist me in regaining the poor girl, and afterwards prevent the wretch from pursuing her!—There I suppose he is!—my lord!

Gov. (Turns short upon him.) Well, old sturdy!—what do you want with my lord?

Grey. Merciful heaven! the father of Cecilia!

Vane. (Listening.) Hey!—indeed!

Grey. Oh! how my heart misgives me!—perhaps this base Woodville—her very brother—

Gov. What, is the old man ill? Sure I know this honest—it is not—yet it is—Grey?

Grey. The same, indeed, my lord.

Gov. No my lord to me, man! my name is Harcourt.

Grey. Blessed be heaven for that, however.

Gov. Be not righteous over much! for that my name is Harcourt, I do not reckon among the first favours of heaven. But, ha, ha! perhaps you thought I had no name at all by this time?—Faith, I put a

pretty trick upon—well, well, well!—(*To the Blacks.*)
—You may retire till my lord is ready.—[*Exeunt Servants, R.H.*]—I am a riddle, honest Grey! but now I am come to expound myself, and make thy fortune into the bargain. It is many a long day since I saw old England. But at last I am come home with a light heart and a heavy purse, design to fetch up my Cicely, give her and my money to the honestest fellow I can find, and grow old amid a rosy race of Britons, springing from a stem reared after my own fashion. There's news for you, my honest friend!

Grey. Alas! how little will he think I deserve his favour when he hears my account of her! And how can I shock a parent with what too severely shocks even myself? (*Aside.*)

Gov. What!—Silent, man?—ha, ha, ha!—I can't but laugh to think how foolish you looked at the second year's end, when no allowance came—but that was my own contrivance; all done on purpose, my good old soul! and now it will come in a lump:—there's the whole difference. Well, and so my dame made her a pattern of housewifery, hey?—Od! I don't intend to touch another pickle or preserve that is not of my little Cicely's own doing; and I'll build her a dairy with every bowl and churn of silver!—Zounds, it shall be a finer sight than the Tower of London!—and we'll set up Dame Deborah's statue before it, like Queen Anne's in St. Paul's church-yard!—but, why doesn't enjoy this discovery, man? art afraid I shall take her from thee? Oh, never think of that; for thou shalt bless every pie she makes; aye, and taste it afterwards, old Pudding-sleeves.

Grey. Ah, sir!

(*Sighing.*)

Gov. Hey! Zounds! What dost mean? Sure my Cicely isn't dead!

Grey. No, not dead, sir!

Gov. She's very near it, then, I suppose?

Grey. No, sir.

Gov. No, sir? Then what the devil do you mean by alarming me thus, with your 'No sirs,' after all?

Grey. Alas! Is there no greater evil?

Gov. None, that I know of; but your whole fraternity are not more like ravens in colour than note. Come, let us know what this mighty evil is?

Grey. For years did she increase in goodness as in beauty; the charm of every young heart, and the sole comfort of those old ones, to whom heaven and man seemed to have consigned her for ever.

Gov. Well, well, I had a little bird told me all this—

Grey. About a twelvemonth ago, during a little absence of mine, a young man of fashion introduced himself into my house; and, my wife being void of suspicion, and the dear girl uninstructed in the ways of this bad world—

Gov. The dog betrayed her! And is this your care, you old—and that ignoramus your wife? Zounds! I am in such a fury! I want to know no more of her infamous conduct. Od! I am strangely tempted to have you strangled this moment, as a just reward for your negligence; and so bury the secret with you.

Grey. It is as effectually buried already, sir—I love the dear unhappy girl too well, ever to tell her heaven gave her to such a father.

Gov. Yes, yes; you are better suited to the—I hope she pays for this severely!—You make her stand in a white sheet, to be pointed at by the whole village every Sunday, to be sure?

Grey. Alas, sir! She put it out of my power even to forgive her—

Gov. Forgive her! forgive her, truly!

Grey. By flying immediately from her only friend. Infirm and poor, I struggled with the joint evils till now, when, having collected enough to support me, I walked up in search of her; it was only yesterday I discovered her in a splendid coach, which I traced to her house.

Gov. A house? I shall run mad entirely! A coach?
—*Why, dare the little brazen-face pretend to elegance, when I took such pains to quench every spark of gentility in her?*

Grey. In the neighbourhood I discovered the name of her seducer; and, in seeking him, met with you.—Moderate your passion, sir—Reflect!—When age is frail, what can we expect in youth? Shall man desert humanity?

Gov. So, so, so!—Now I am to be tortured with your preaching—I renounce the unworthy little slut. I have no friend—no daughter—no any thing. Od! I would sooner build an hospital for idiots, like Swift, and endow it with all my fortune, than bestow it on one who thus perverts reason. Hark ye, sir—Forget the way to this house!—Forget you ever saw my face! Would I had never seen yours!—For, if you dare to send her whining to me, I'll torment you with every plague, power, wealth, law, or even lawyers can set in motion.—By heaven, I abjure the audacious little wretch for ever! and will sooner return to India and bury my gold with those from whom it was taken, than bestow a single shilling on her, when she loses her coach and her house!

Grey. (*Contemptuously.*) And I will sooner want a shilling, than suffer her to waste her youth in a state which will render her age an insupportable burthen! Fear not, sir, ever seeing her or me again; for the bosom which reared, will joyfully receive her, nor farther embitter her remaining days with the knowledge she was born the equal of her undoer; and deprived herself of all those blessings, heaven only hid, never denied her.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

Gov. Who would have a daughter?—Zounds! I am as hot as if I was in the black hole at Calcutta. If miss had only married a lout, from ignorance of her birth, I could have forgiven it; but her puppy being of fashion, the papers will get hold of it, and I shall be paragraphed into purgatory. Fools can turn wits on these occasions; and, 'A certain Governor and his daughter,' will set the grinners in motion from Piccadilly to Aldgate. This insolent old fellow too!—I need not wonder where she got her courage! Not but I like his spirit—Od! I like it much! It proves his

innocence. What the devil did I drive him away for!—Here, dogs!—Run after that old man in black, and order him to return to me this moment.

Enter LORD GLENMORE, R.H.

Lord G. And now, brother, I am ready for you.

Gov. Yes; and now, brother, I have something else to mind, and my servants moreover— [*Exit, L.H.*

Lord G. What new whim can this troublesome mortal have taken into his head?—(*A rapping at the door.*)—I am not at home, remember.—Miss Mortimer!—Who's with her?

*Enter MISS MORTIMER, with CECILIA in mourning,
L.H.*

Miss M. Nay, as to that circumstance—Bless me, here's my lord!

Cec. My lord! Good heavens, I shall sink into the earth!

Miss M. He can never guess at you—Recover, my dear creature!

Lord G. Is the lady indisposed, Miss Mortimer?

Miss M. Yes, my lord; that is, no—I don't know what I am saying. She has been ill lately, and riding has a little overcome her; that's all.—(*Aside to Cecilia.*)—Struggle to keep up, for heaven's sake and your own.

Cec. Impossible!

(*Lord Glenmore draws a hall chair, in which she faints.*)

Lord G. Warner! drops and water, in a moment—how beautiful she is!—her features are exquisitely fine!

Miss M. They are thought so, my lord.

Lord G. Her pulse returns—she revives.

Cec. I beg your pardon, madam!—my lord, too! I am shocked to have occasioned so much trouble.

Miss M. Absurd to apologize for the infirmity of nature:—my lord, I do assure you, was quite anxious—

Lord G. The man must surely have lost every sense, who can see this lady, even when deprived of her's, without emotion:—but to me, the languor of illness had ever something peculiarly interesting.—(*Aside.*)—I wonder who this elegant creature is! Her hand seems to tremble strangely.

Cec. Oh, madam!— (*Apart to Miss M.*)

Miss M. Silence and recollection alone can secure you from suspicion; I confess, I relied on his absence. (*Aside to Cecilia.*)

Re-enter the GOVERNOR, L.H.

Gov. He won't return, hey?—Od! I like the old Cambrian the better for it:—I have fired his Welch blood finely.—Why, what a blockhead was I, not to go after him myself! Methinks, I should like to know miss, when I meet her in her *coach* too. Um—did he not tell me something of tracing the seducer into this house!—(*Stands in amazement a moment, then whistles.*)—Woodville's mistress, by every thing contrary! Od, I shall seize the gipsy with redoubled satisfaction! but I must keep my own counsel, or my old beau of a brother will roast me to death on my system of education. Hey! who has he got there?—(*Cecilia rises.*)—A pretty lass, faith!—Ah, there is the very thing I admire!—there is gentility, without the fantastical flourishes of fashion!—just the very air I hoped my minx would have had. (*Lord Glenmore having led off Cecilia, R.H. returns.*)

Lord G. I don't know how, but my inclination to this business is over. I think I'll let the matter alone at present.

Gov. The devil you will; why, by to-morrow, Woodville may have married her.

Lord G. D'ye think so? well, then let's go.

Gov. And, what d'ye intend to do with her, pray?

Lord G. (*Aside.*) I won't trust this weathercock till all is safe.—I care not what becomes of her, so she is out of my way;—send her to Bridewell, perhaps!

Gov. To Bridewell, truly?—no, that you sha'n't, neither; Bridewell, quotha!—why, who knows but the fault may be all that young rake-hell, your son's?

Lord G. My son's sir! let me tell you, I have not bred him in such a manner.

Gov. Oh, if breeding were any security—Zounds, I shall betray all by another word! (*Aside.*)

Lord G. What now can have changed you? but you are more inconstant than our climate. Did you ever know one minute what you should think the next? However, to satisfy your scruples, I intend to dispatch her to a nunnery; and, if that don't please you, e'en take charge of her yourself. [*Exeunt, R.H.*]

Vane. (*Comes forward.*) Ha, ha, ha! why, this would make a comedy!—and so, of all birds in the air, his dignified lordship has pitched on me for the husband of the Governor's daughter and his own niece!—Well, if I can but go through with this, it will be admirable!—Thanked by one for making my fortune, and safe from the anger of all.

Enter SERVANT, L.H.

Ser. Mr. Woodville, sir, is just gone into the house you bade me watch. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Vane. The devil he is!—Why, then I must consign my intended to him for one night more, and persuade my lord to delay our seizure till morning; for, to meet with him, would certainly produce an agreement of all parties, and a marriage which would never enroll my name in the family pedigree, or Governor's will. [*Exit, L.H.*]

SCENE II.—*Cecilia's Dressing-room.—Candles burning and her clothes scattered.*

Enter WOODVILLE, R.H.U.E.

Wood. Thanks to that dear lawyer's lucky absence, I have a few happy hours, my love, to spend with thee—(*Looks at her clothes.*)—already retired? sure

I have not left my key in the garden-gate. No, here it is—(*Rings the bell and takes off his sword, then throws himself into a chair.*)—Nobody answer—I don't understand this. Perhaps I shall disturb her—I'll steal into her chamber—(*Goes off, R.H.U.E. and presently returns disordered.*)—Not there! her clothe, too, the same she had on last:—oh, my heart misgives me!—but where are all the servants?—(*Rings very violently, calling at the same time.*)—Bridget! Robert! Jacob!

Enter BRIDGET, L.H. with her hat on.

—Bridget! what's become of your lady?

Brid. Really, sir, I can't say.—Don't you know?

Wood. If I did I shouldn't have asked you.

Brid. (*After a little pause.*) Why, sure, sir, my lady has not run away?—and yet something runs in my head, as if she had.—I thought that spark came for no good to-day.

Wood. What spark, girl?

Brid. Why, just after you went away, comes a young man, a monstrous genteel one, and very handsome too, I must needs say; with fine dark eyes, and a fresh colour.

Wood. Damn his colour! tell me his business.

Brid. So he axed for my lady, and would not tell me what he wanted: I came with her, however; but she no sooner set eyes on him than she sent me out; which argufied no good, you'll say; and, before I could possibly come back, though I ran as fast as ever my legs could carry me, he was gone, and she writing and crying for dear life; but that was no news, so I did not mind it: and when she gave me leave to go to the play, thought no more harm than the child unborn.

Wood. It must be a scheme beyond all doubt, and I am the dupe of a dissembling, ungrateful—Oh, Cecilia!

(*Throws himself in a chair.*)

Brid. (*Softening her voice, and setting her dress.*)

If I was as you, sir, I would not fret about her ; there is not a lady in the land would slight a gentleman so handsome and sweet tempered—I scorn to flatter, for my own part.—Inferials mustn't direct their betters : but had I been in my lady's place, a king upon his throne would not have tempted me.—Handsome him that handsome does, say I ; and I am sure you did handsome by her : for if she could have eat gold, she might have had it.—He might take some notice, truly.

(*Aside.*)

Wood. (*Starting up.*) Where was she writing ?

Brid. In the little drawing-room, sir.—[*Exit Woodville, R.H.*—This ridiculous love turn people's brains, I think.—I am sure I said enough to open his eyes ; but may be, I don't look so handsome, because I am not so fine.—Hey ! a thought strikes me ! My lady is gone, that's plain. Back she will not come, is as plain.—(*Gathers together Cecilia's elegant clothes.*)—I'll put on these, and he'll think she gave 'em to me : then he may find out I am as pretty as she : if not—he and I are of very different opinions.

[*Exit, L.H.*

Re-enter WOODVILLE, R.H. more disordered.

Wood. Cruel, ungrateful, barbarous girl ! to forsake me in the very moment I was resolving to sacrifice every thing to her ! but 'tis just.—First dupes to the arts of man, the pupil soon knows how to foil him at his own weapons. Perhaps the discovery is fortunate : in a short time I must have borne the whole disgrace of her ill conduct, and my father's resentment had the bitterest aggravation. But, is she indeed gone ? and will continual to-morrows come, without one hope to render them welcome ?

Enter JACOB, L.H.

Villain ! where's your lady ?

Jac. 'Las a deazy, how can I tell, zur ?

Wood. Where are all your fellows?

Jac. Abroad, making halliday.

Wood. When did you go out? Who gave you leave?

Jac. My leady, her own zelf; and I'll tell you how 'tware.—After dinner I geed her a noate; and, when zhe had red un, zhe axed me if zo be as how I had ever zeed the lions? Zoa I told her noa; nor no mour I never did.—Zoa zhe geed me half a crown, and bid me goa and make myself happy. I thought it ware desperate koind of her; zoa I went and zeed the huge creturs; and arter, only stowped a bit to peap at the moniment, and hay my fortin tuold by conj'rer in the Old Bailey; and aw zaid—

Wood. What the devil does it signify to me what he said?—Hark'e, sir, I see in your face you know more of your mistress.

Jac. Dang it, then my feace do lie hugely!

Wood. Tell me the whole truth, villain! or I'll stab you to the heart this instant. (*Draws his sword.*)

Jac. (*Kneels.*) I wull, zur, indeed I wull: doan't ye terrify me zoa! I do forget every thing in the whole world.

Wood. Be sincere, and depend upon my rewarding you.

Jac. Why, I wish I meay die this maument, if conj'rer did not zey I should lose my pleace! nay, aw do verily think aw zaid zomething o' my being put in fear o' my loife. Loard knows, I little thought how zoon his words would come to pass.

Wood. Will you dally?

Jac. Zoa, as I zaid, zur, when I com'd huome again, I found all the duors aupen, and not a zoul to be zeed.

Wood. (*Aside.*) This fellow can never mean to impose on me, and I must think it a planned affair.—While I was in the country, Jacob, did your mistress see much company?

Jac. Cuompany!—noa, not to speak an—not gentlewomen.

Wood. Gentlewomen ! blockhead !—Why, had she any male visitors ?

Jac. Anan !

Wood. I must brain thee at last booby !—Did any men come to see her, then ?

Jac. Oh, yes, zur, yes : two gentlemen com'd almost every deay.

Wood. How ! two gentlemen ? I shall run distracted ! Young and handsome ?

Jac. Not auver young, zur, nor auver handsome ; but drest muortal foine.

Wood. So, they came almost every day ? Very pretty, indeed, Miss Cecilia !—Was you never called up while they staid ?—Did they come together, or alone ?

Jac. Aloane.

Wood. I thought as much ; yes, I thought as much. But was you never called up, Jacob ?

Jac. Yes, zur, when one aw um ware here one deay, I ware caal'd up for zomething or other.

Wood. Well, why don't you go on ? I am on the rack !

Jac. Don't ye look zo muortal angry, then ?

Wood. Well, well, I won't, my good fellow !—There's money for thy honesty.

Jac. Well ; theare aw ware—

Wood. Speak out freely ; you can tell me nothing worse than I imagine ; you won't shock me in the least ; not at all.

Jac. Well ; theare aw ware pleaying on that theare music thing, like a coffin, and madam ware a zinging to un like any black-bird—

Wood. A music-master !—Is that all, booby ?

(*Pushes him down.*)

Jac. Yes—but 'tother, zur—

Wood. Aye, I had forgot. What of him, good Jacob ? what of him ?

Jac. I ware never caal'd up while aw steay'd ;
zoa (I can't but zeay, I had a curoosity to knaw what
brought he here) one deay I peap'd through the keay-

hoole, and zeed un—(*Titters.*)—I shall ne'er forget—

Wood. Tell me this instant, or I shall burst with rage and suspense.

Jac. Screaping on a leetle viddle, no bigger than my hond; while madam ware a huolding out her quoats, and danzing all round the room, zoa.

(*Mimics the minuet awkwardly.*)

Wood. why, I believe the impudent bumpkin dares to jest with my misery! and yet I have no other avenue; for the rest, I fear, are knaves, and he seems only a fool.—And are these all that came, Jacob?

Jac. Noa, thare ware one moare, zur; a leetle mon in a black quoot—but aw only cuom'd now and tan.

Wood. A disguise, no doubt! Yes, yes; they were artful enough.

Jac. And zoa, arter he'd done wi' my leady, aw did zhut hiz zelf up wi' Bridget; and zoa, I ax'd her all about un, and zhe said az how aw com'd to teach madam to turn themmin great round balls, all bleue, and red, and yaller, that do stond by the books, and larned zhe to wroite.

Wood. Yes, yes; Mrs. Bridget was in all her secrets, I don't doubt. If that fellow in black comes here again, keep him, if you value your life, and send for me.—I know not what to do or think, and must renew my search, though hopeless of success.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Jac. Dang it, but he's in a desperate teaking!—Rabbit me, but I ware muortally afeard aw un too, for aw flourished hiz zword az yeazy az I could a cudgel!—I do think conj'ror moight as well ha' tould me madam would ha' run away, while aw ware about it, and then I moight ha' run'd away first. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Enter GREY, L.H.

Grey. At length I have gained entrance into this house of shame, which now, alas,! contains my darl-

ing Cecilia: plunged in vice, and lost to every sentiment I spent so many anxious years in implanting — This does not seem to be the abode of pleasure, nor have I met a single being.

Re-enter WOODVILLE, R.H.U.E.—Sees Grey, and drawing his sword, flies at, and seizes him.

Wood. Ha!—a man!—and in black, as Jacob said. —Villain! this moment is your last.

Grey. (*Turning suddenly upon him.*) Yes, young seducer, add to the daughter's ruin the father's murder! Stab my heart, as you already have my happiness!

Wood. Alas! was this her visitor? I dare not speak to him!

Grey. Embosomed by affluence, exalted by title, peace still shall be far from thy heart; for thou, with the worst kind of avarice, hast, by specious pretences, wrested from poverty its last dear possession—virtue.

Wood. Pierced to the soul as I am by your reproaches, I dare appeal to Cecilia herself for a testimony of my contrition!—How shall I convince you?

Grey. Hardly by a life of repentance.—But I debase myself to exchange a word with you. Give me back my Cecilia!—Ruined as she is, I yet would recover her!—Give her back, then, to a father you first taught her to fear, and an habitation, too humble for any but the good to be happy in.

Wood. Alas, sir! can you trifle with my misery?—Do you give her back to the wretch who cannot survive her loss!—Let me owe her hand to your bounty, though her heart to her own!—Did you know what this elopement of hers has cost me,—

Grey. Oh!—Most accomplished villain! But think not to dupe me too!

Wood. Who but you can have robbed me of her since morning.

Grey. Shallow artifice!

Wood. Hear me, sir! and even believe me, when I

solemnly swear I have deeply repented my crime, and offered her all the reparation in my power; but, since then,—

Grey. What since then?

Wood. Either by your means, or some other, she has fled.

Grey. Impossible!

Wood. 'Tis too true, by heaven!

Grey. Perhaps, while you are thus ingeniously deluding me, she indeed flies. Study some other deception, while I examine the whole house, for nothing else can convince me. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Wood. Surely this injured venerable man was sent by heaven to complete my misfortunes! My passions subside, but only into a vague horror and despondency, even more dreadful! If with rash hand she has shortened her days, what remain of mine will be, indeed, all her father predicts.—(*Walking by the toilet.*)—Ha! a letter!

Re-enter GREY, R.H.

Grey. A total loneliness in the house!

Wood. Now, sir, be convinced: I have just found a letter from her.

Grey. This cannot be the invention of a moment:—let me read it.—It is indeed her hand.—(*Opens the letter, and reads.*)—*Receive this as my last farewell. Providence has unexpectedly sent me a friend, whose protection I dare accept; and time may perhaps subdue a passion which seems interwoven with my being. Forget me, I entreat; and seek that happiness with another, I can never hope to bestow or partake. Consoled only by reflecting, that the grief my error occasions is inferior to that I should have felt, had I, by an ungenerous use of my power, made you, in turn, my victim. Once more, adieu! All search will certainly be fruitless.—P.S. In the cabinet you will find your valuable presents; and the key is in a dressing-box.*—(*Woodville snatches the letter, and bursts into*

tears.)—Cecilia! I may say, with tears of joy, thou art indeed my daughter! more dear, if possible, than ever! A daughter monarchs might contend for, though thy weak father abjures thee! May the friend you have found have a heart but like your own!—For you, young man!—But I leave you to your anguish: the loss of such a woman is a sufficient punishment.

Wood. Stay, sir!—(*Rises.*)—By your holy profession, I conjure you, stay!—Plunge me not into total despair!—Though without a clue to her asylum, I would fain believe my heart will lead me to it; and let me then hope you will bestow her on me!

Grey. There is a something in your manner, young gentleman, that affects me. I have been young, wild, and extravagant, myself; and what is more strange, have not forgot I was so: my own experience proves reformation possible; act up to her, and atone your error.

Wood. I will endeavour it, sir! and, oh, could those who yet but waver, know what has passed in my heart during the last hour, who would dare to deviate?

[*Exeunt, L.H.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Cecilia's House.*

BBIDGET discovered, dressed in Cecilia's clothes, mixed with every thing vulgar and tawdry.

Brid. So, I am ready against our gentleman comes.—Deuce on him, to run away last night, the moment I was dressed, and with an infernal fellow too!—Lard, how can people of quality demean themselves by keeping company with infernals! However, one thing I am sure of, he's too much on the fidgets to stay long away.

from our house ; and, in the mean while, I can entertain myself extremely well. (*Sits down to the toilet.*)

Jac. (*Without, L.H.*) I tell ye, my leady's not at huome.

Gov. (*Without, L.H.*) I tell you, I won't take your word for it ; so come, my lord, and see.

Brid. Hey-day, my lord ! What's the news now, I wonder !

Enter LORD GLENMORE and the GOVERNOR, L.H.—
Both stop short.

Gov. Oh, I thought madam had learnt enough of the *ton* to lie by proxy !

Brid. Dear heart ! I am all of a twitteration !

Lord G. The vulgarity of the wench is astonishing !

Gov. Um !—why, a little gawky, or so—there's no denying it.—(*Aside.*)—Here's a pretty discovery, now, after all my projects ! 'Thank fortune, the secret is yet my own, though.

Lord G. (*Advancing to her.*) I ought to beg your excuse, madam, for so abrupt an intrusion ; but the opportunity, and so fair a temptation, will, I flatter myself, be a sufficient apology.

Brid. (*Aside.*) He takes me for my lady, that's a sure thing !—Oh, this is charming !—You need not make no 'pologys, my lord ; inferials never knows how to suspect people of quality ; but I understands good breeding better.

Lord G. (*Aside.*) Why, what a barn-door mawkin it is !—Your politeness, madam, can only be equalled by your beauty !

Brid. Dear heart, my lord, you flatter me.—Won't you please to sit ?

(*Waits affectedly till they consent to seat themselves.*)

Lord G. (*To the Governor.*) Surely, by using my title, she knows me.

Gov. Zounds, I have a great mind to make her know me ! Od, I shall never be able to contain !

(*Aside.*)

Lord G. I was afraid, madam, I should prove an unwelcome guest; but beauty like yours—

Brid. Does your lordship think I so very handsome, then?—Lard, how lucky was my dressing myself!

Lord G. (*Aside.*) Affected idiot!—I was afraid, madam, too, of meeting Woodville here.—(*Aside.*)—I know not what to say to her.

Brid. He has not been here this morning; but, if he had, he knows better than to ax arter my company, I do assure you, my—lordship.

Lord G. I have been told he intends marrying you; what a pity to monopolize such merit!

Brid. If he has any such kind intention, 'tis more than I knows of, I assure you.

Lord G. His keeping that wise resolution from you, is some little comfort, however. (*Aside.*)

Brid. But, I promise ye, I shall make a rare person of quality; for I loves cards, coaches, dancing, and dress, to my very heart—nothing in the world better—but blind-man's buff. I had some thoughts of taking a trip to Sadler's Wells, or Fox-hall, but they don't begin till five o'clock.

Gov. (*Aside.*) Ha, ha! though she can hardly spell out the Ten Commandments, she could break every one with as much ease and impudence, as if she had been bred in the circle of St. James's.

Lord G. But, madam—

Brid. My lord.

Lord G. You know, allowing Woodville willing to marry you, it is not in his power, while his father lives, without forfeiting his fortune, the value of which you doubtless understand?

Brid. Oh, yes, yes; for sartin, my lord.

Lord G. Who knows, too, how far an incensed parent may carry his resentment?—He might find means to entrap and punish you.

Brid. Ha, ha, ha!—he entrap me!—that would be a good jest! No, no, I have more of the lady of quality than to be so easily caught.

Gov. (*Mimicking her.*) He, he, he! that is the

only particular in which you have nothing at all of the lady of quality.

Lord G. With me you may share a higher rank and larger fortune, without those fears: I am of an age—

Brid. Yes, one may see that without being a conjuror.—Why, will you marry me, my lord?

Lord G. Convince me that you don't love this Woodville, and I know not how far my passion may carry me.

Brid. Love him! Do you think I know no more of high life than that comes to? To be sure, he is a sweet pretty man, and all that: but as to love, I love nobody half so well as myself.

Lord G. Upon my soul, I believe you; and wish he had the whole benefit of the declaration.—(*Aside to the Governor.*)—Her ingratitude is as shocking as her ignorance, and Bridewell too gentle a punishment.

Gov. Then build a bridewell large enough to contain the whole sex; for the only difference between her and the rest is,—this country mawkin tells what the town-bred misses conceal.

Lord G. Why, Governor, you are as testy as if you had the care of her education. (*Aside to Governor.*)

Gov. I the care!—Zounds, what I say is merely from friendship to your lordship. I hate to see you deceive yourself.—(*Aside.*)—Surely, he can never suspect!

(*Bridget is employed in cramming trinkets from the dressing-table into her pocket.*)

Brid. Now I am ready to go, my lord.

Gov. (*Roughly snatching her hand.*) To where you little dream of, you vain, affected, presuming, ignorant baggage.

Brid. Hey-day!—My lord!

Lord G. Appeal not to me, base woman!—Know, I am the father of that poor dupe, Woodville.

Brid. Dear heart, be ye indeed! What will become of me, then?

Lord G. And, as a moderate punishment for your hypocrisy, ambition, and ingratitude, sentence you to be shut up for life in a monastery

Brid. O, lard! among monsters!

Gov. No, ignoramus! No, among nuns: though they are but monsters in human nature either.

Brid. What, where they'll cut off my hair, and make me wear sackcloth next my skin?

Gov. Yes, if they leave you any skin at all.

Brid. Oh, dear, dear, dear!—(*Sobs and groans.*)—Upon my bended knees, I beg you not to send me there! Why, I shall go mallancholy—I shall make away with myself, for sartin; and my ghost will appear to you all in white.

Gov. All in black, I rather think; for the devil a speck of white is there in your whole composition.

Lord G. Your conduct, wretch! justifies a severer sentence. To seduce him from his duty, was crime enough.

Brid. Who! I seduce him! I did not, my lord—indeed I did not.

Lord G. Have you not owned—

Brid. No, indeed, no; that I wished to take my lady's place, I believe I did own—

Gov. Ha, ha, ha! Very prettily devised, faith, for a young beginner!—Come, come,—(*Chucking her under the chin.*)—we must give you credit for this, miss:—your lady! ha, ha, ha!

Lord G. Shallow subterfuge!

Enter VANE and the SLAVES, L.H.

Vane, is all ready?—Seize this woman, and observe my orders.

Brid. Ah, dear heart! I shall die away, if the blacks do but touch me!—Indeed, you do mistake me!—I be only Bridget!

Gov. I would give ten thousand pounds that you were only Bridget, you artful puss!—Take her away, however; and let us try how miss likes riding out in her own coach.

(*Vane and the Slaves seize her; she screams out, and catches Lord Glenmore's coat, falling on her knees.*)

Enter JACOB, L.H. behind Bridget.

Jac. Why, what a dickens be ye all at here?—Zoa, what's my leady theare?

Lord G. See there now! Oh, the artful Jezebel!

Brid. Oh, Jacob!—Why, don't ye see I am Bridget?—Pray satisfy my lord here.

Jac. Why, be ye Bridget?—Never trust me else!

Gov. Here's a fool of t'other sex now, can hardly take a hint though so plainly given him!—Thanks to the natural difference, for art is nature in woman.

(Lord Glenmore draws the Governor aside.)

Jac. Auh, Bridget, Bridget! Where didst thee get theesum foine claws?—Noa, noa, as thee'st brew'd, thee meay'st beake.

Brid. Oh, do you take pity on me! Why, they be going to carry me to some outlandish place, and make a nunnery of me.

Jac. A nunnery! What's that? Any thing Cristin? Well, if I do spake to um, will ye ha'e me?

Brid. Oh, yes, yes, yes!

Lord G. Brother, I shall leave you to the completion of this affair; I am sick to the soul of the gawky.
[Exit, L.H.]

Gov. Yes, yes, I don't doubt it, I don't doubt it.—Will you take her, or no?—*(To Vane.)*—I shall never be able to stifle my agitation, and burst with rage if I show it.

Jac. Why, zure, zure, ye won't carr' away our Bridget?

Vane. Ha, ha, ha!

Gov. Oh, she has beat her meaning into thy thick scull at at last! Pr'ythee keep thy block-head out of my way, if thou mean'st to keep it on thy own shoulders.

Jac. Why, be ye in arnest, then? Dear heart alive! Why, this is cousin Bridget!

Brid. Only send for Mr. Woodville.

Gov. Prettily devised again! Ha, ha, ha!—Dost think, my little dear, we have lived three times as long

as your ladyship to learn a quarter as much?—Send for Mr. Woodville, hey?—No, no, you won't find us quite so simple.

Jac. Oh, doan't ye, doan't ye carr' off zhe! or, if ye wull, do pray take I.

Vane. Yes, you would be a choice piece of lumber, truly.

Gov. Drag her away this moment.

Brid. Oh, dear, oh, dear! to be hanged at last for another's crime is all that vexes me.

[*The Slaves force Bridget off, L.H. the rest follow.*]

SCENE II.—*Miss Mortimer's Apartment.*

Enter CECILIA, R.H. and sits down to embroidery.

Cec. How fond, how weak, how ungrateful are our hearts! Mine still will presumptuously fancy this house its home, and ally itself to every one to whom Woodville is dear.

Enter LORD GLENMORE, L.H.

Oh heavens, my lord!—How unlucky!—If I go, he may find the captain with Miss Mortimer. (*Aside.*)

Lord G. You see, madam, you have only to retire, to engage us to pursue you even to rudeness.—But tell me, can it be your own choice to punish us so far as to prefer solitude to our society?

Cec. I know myself too well, my lord, to receive distinctions of which I am unworthy; yet think not, therefore, I fail in respect.

Lord G. But is that charming bosom susceptible of nothing beyond respect? Why is it capable of inspiring a passion it cannot participate?

Cec. Your goodness, my lord—my profound veneration will always attend you. But the more generously you are inclined to forget what is due to yourself, the more strongly it is impressed on my memory.

Lord G. Were what you say true, the bounties of

nature atone amply to you for the parsimony of fortune ; nor would your want of every other advantage lessen your merit, or my sense of it.

Cec. Had he thought thus a few months since, how happy had I now been !—(*Aside.*)—Your approbation at once flatters and serves me, by justifying Miss Mortimer's protection of me.

Lord G. Her partiality for you does her more honour than it can ever do you advantage. But you must tell me how she gained first the happiness of knowing you.

Cec. My—my lord, by a misfortune so touching—

Lord G. Nay, I would not distress you neither ; yet I own, madam, I wish to make a proposal worth a serious answer ; but ought first to know why you affect a mystery ? Tell me then, my dear, every incident of your life, and I will raise you to a title, I may without vanity say, many have aspired too !

Cec. You oppress my very soul, my lord !—But, alas ! unconquerable obstacles deprive me for ever of that title. Neither would I obtain it by alienating such a son from such a father.

Lord G. Put him entirely out of the question ; the meanness of his conduct acquits me to myself. Do you know, madam, he has resolved to marry a creature of low birth, illiterate, vulgar, and impudent ? And, to complete her perfections, she has been his mistress at least.

Cec. Surely he knows, and purposely shocks me thus.

(*Aside.*)

Lord G. But your integrity doesn't render you less amiable in my eyes ; it greatly enhances every other merit. As to his wretch, I have her in my power, and shall make her dearly repent.

Cec. Then I am lost indeed !—(*Aside.*)—You have, my lord, though I know not how, discovered—

(*Rises in confusion.*)

Lord G. (*Rises, and takes snuff, without looking at her.*) Oh, nothing more easy, madam ; I had him carefully traced to her house, and, during his absence, took servants, and forced her away.

Cec. That, however, cannot be me. Every word seems to add to a mystery I dare not inquire into.—(*Aside.*)—Deprived of the weak, the guilty, the miserable wretch you justly condemn, a little time will no doubt incline him to his duty.

Lord G. I will confess I resent his misconduct the more, as I ever treated him with friendship as well as tenderness: to presume to insult me, by introducing into a family like mine the creature of his pleasures; a wretch, only distinguished by his folly and her own infamy—But can you, who so powerfully plead the cause of another, be deaf to the sighs of a man who adores you, who offers you a rank—

Cec. Be satisfied, my lord, with knowing I have all that esteem your merit claims, which influences me beyond every casual advantage.

Lord G. But, madam—

Cec. Alas, my lord!—(*Bursts into tears.*)—Be silent, if possible, both pride and virtue. I have deserved, and will submit to it; yet surely the bitterness of this moment expiates all past offences.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Lord G. Amiable creature! what an amazing elegance of mind and person! Tears were her only answers to my questions, and blushes to my looks; yet these only heighten a curiosity they have softened into love.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

SCENE III.—*Woodville's Apartment.*

WOODVILLE discovered.

Wood. No intelligence of my Cecilia yet!—Were I only assured of her safety, it would be some consolation.

Enter JACOB, L.H.

Jac. Zur, zur!—I do meak so bowld as to ax to spake to you.

Wood. Jacob! my honest fellow, the very sight of

thee revives my hopes, and sets my heart in motion !
Well, what's the news ?

Jac. Zurprizing news indeed, zur !—Loord, I thought I should never meat wi' you :—I com'd to your lodgings twice, and ye warn't up.

Wood. Up ! 'sdeath, you ignorant booby ! why didn't you order them to rouse me that moment ?

Jac. Loord, zur ! why your gentleman, as they do caal un, ware so terrible foine, I were afeard of affronting un !

Wood. Plague on the stupidity of both, say I ! But what's all this to the purpose ?—the news, the news ?

Jac. 'Las-a-deazy ! muortal bad news, indeed !

Wood. You tedious blockhead ! is your lady returned ?

Jac. Noa, zur !

(Shaking his head very mournfully.)

Wood. *(Aside.)* The horrid forebodings of my heart recur ; yet, surely, she could not be so desperate ! Shocking as the suspence is, I more dread the certainty.—*(Aside.)*—Speak, however, my good fellow !—*(Jacob wipes his eyes.)*—I shall ever value your sensibility. Tell me, then, the simple truth, whatever it may be.

Jac. I wull, zur, I wull. There has com'd two foine gentlemen, wi' swords by their sides, just for all the world like yourn.

Wood. Well, and what did these gentlemen say ?

Jac. Why, they went up stears, willy nilly, and carr'd off—our Bridget ! *(Bursts out a crying.)*

Wood. You impudent, ignorant clown ! I'll give you cause for your tears. *(Shakes him.)*

Jac. Loord, loord ! do ye ha' a little Cristin comiseration !—Well, if ever I do cuome nigh ye again, I do wish ye may break every buone in my skin.

Wood. *(Walking about in a rage.)* To insult me with your own paltry love affairs ! These great and mighty gentlemen were only constables, I dare swear, and your fears converted their staves to swords.

Jac. Ay, but that an't the worst neither. I do ve-

rily think my turn wull come next:—can't sleep in my bed for thinking on't, nor enjoy a meal's meat;—zo, except you do bring your sword, and cuome and live in our houze, I wull guo out on't, that's a sure thing; for I had rather scaere craws at a graat a deay all my loife long, than 'bide there to be so terrifoid.

Wood. Scare craws, truly! why, the craws will scaere you, ye hen-hearted puppy! There, teake that, —(*Gives him money.*)—and guo home, or to the devil, so you never fall in my way again.

Jac. Zome faulk that I do know wull see the black gentleman first, 'tis my belief—zoa, I had best keep out o' his way too. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Enter CAPTAIN HARCOURT, R.H.

Har. Woodville, what's the matter? Why, you will raise the neighbourhood!

Re-enter JACOB, L.H.

Jac. Here's a peaper housemaid do zend you, wi' her humble duty; but if zo be it do put you in another desperate teaking, I do huope you wull zend for zhe to beat, and not I.—Loord, loord! what will becuome of me in thic woide world of London!

[*Exit, L.H.*]

Har. Ha, ha, ha! he is a choice fellow!

Wood. A heart oppressed with its own feelings, fears every thing. I have hardly courage to open a letter without an address.

Har. Come, come, give it me, then. Hey! what? Confusion!—Was ever any thing so unlucky!

((*Attempts to tear it.*))

Wood. (*Snatches it from him.*) Ha! it is important, then!

Har. Why will you invent torments for yourself? —(*Aside.*)—My own letter, by every thing careless! Here's a stroke!

Wood. (*Reads in a broken voice and manner.*)—*Woodville on the brink of marriage—You will be*

disengaged—A nobleman—Damnation!—Heart and fortune at her feet—I'll let his soul out there!—Hell and furies!—but I will find him, if money—Never will I close my eyes till—Oh, Cecilia!

(Throws himself into a seat.)

Har. This is the most unforeseen—I know not what to say to him—Pr'ythee, Woodville, do not sacrifice so many reasonable presumptions in her favour, to a paper that may be a forgery, for aught you know.

Wood. Oh, Charles! that I could think so!—but I have seen the villain's execrable hand somewhere! Did you never see the hand?

Har. Um—I can't but own I have.—What the devil shall I say to him? *(Aside.)*

Enter GOVERNOR, L.H.

Gov. Woodville, my dear boy! I am come to have a little talk with thee.—Charles! don't run away! you are in all your cousin's secrets.

Wood. What should possess this tiresome mortal to come here?—*(Aside.)*—I should have waited on you in half an hour, sir.

Gov. Ay, that's what I wanted to avoid.—The more I talk to your father, Frank, the more I find him fixed on the match with his Miss Mortimer. Nay, he tells me, he will have you married this very day.

Wood. That's mighty probable, in the humour I am in.

Gov. Ah, Frank! the girl I offer thee—

Wood. Is no more agreeable to me, than her you despise.

Gov. How do you know that, peppercorn? How do you know that?—Od, I could tell you—

Wood. And to tell you my full mind, sir, I had rather make myself miserable to gratify my father, than any other man.

Gov. Od, thou art so obstinate, boy, I can't help loving thee.—I don't see why I am obliged to know his miss is my daughter. I have a great mind to own

what we have done with her ; and, if he will marry, e'en take care nobody hinders him ; then trump up a farce about forgiving them : and yet it goes against my conscience to punish the puppy for life, though he has punished me pretty sufficiently, by the lord Harry.

(*Aside.*)

Har. I don't like this affair at all, and tremble for my Sophia, when I see this odd soul so inveterate against her.

(*Aside.*)

Gov. Well, my lad, do you know I am as deep in all your secrets as your favourite valet de chambre ?

(*To Woodville.*)

Wood. I don't understand you, sir.

Gov. Pho, pho, pho ! keep that face till I show thee one as solemn as my lord's. Why should not you please yourself, and marry your miss, instead of your father's ?

Wood. and Har. Astonishing !

Gov. Od, if you turn out the honest fellow I take you for, I know a pretty round sum an onion and a black coat may one day or other entitle you to ; so never mind Lord Gravity's resentment.

Wood. I act from better motives, sir ; and were unworthy your wealth, could it tempt me to disobey the best of fathers.

Gov. Why, then, marry Miss Mortimer, and oblige him ; take a back seat in your own coach, get a family of pale-faced brats, born with ostrich feathers on their heads, and hate away a long life with all due decorum. Zounds, here's a fellow more whimsical than—even myself. Yesterday you would have the puss, spite of every body ; but you no sooner find it in your power to oblige your best friend, by humouring your inclinations, than, lo ! you are taken with a most violent fit of duty and submission ! Od, you don't know what you have lost by it ! But, since you are bent on crossing me, I'll cross you, and once for all too. My secret shall henceforth be as impenetrable as the philosopher's stone. Ay, stare as you please, I'll give you more years than you have seen days to guess it in.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

Har. What this uncle of ours can mean is quite beyond my guess.

Wood. What signifies seeking to expound by reason, actions in which it had no share? His brain is indubitably touched. But Cecilia lies heavy on my heart, and excludes every other thought.

Har. Time may explain the secret of that letter, which, I will lay my life, she despises: a woman who did not, would have kept it from your hands.

Wood. That's true, indeed! If I wrong her, and this was but an insult, there is a noble sincerity in her own letter which sets suspicion at defiance. If he stumbled on one word of truth during this visit, the crisis of my fate approaches. Oh, wherever thou art, if the exalted being I will still hope my Cecilia, thou shalt know I have at least deserved thee!

[*Exeunt, R.H.*]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A mean room, boots, bridles, &c. hanging all round.*

BRIDGET discovered sitting very mournfully, her fine clothes in great disorder. *A table by her, with a small roll, a glass of water, an old dogs-eared book, and a bit of looking-glass.*

Brid. Dear heart! dear heart! what a miserable time have I passed! and where I be to pass my whole life, my lord here only knows!—I have not much stomach indeed; neither have I much breakfast.

(*Eats a bit of bread, and bursts into tears.*)

Enter the GOVERNOR, L.H.

Gov. Had I more sins to answer for, than a college

of Jesuits, I surely expiate them all, by going through a purgatory in this life beyond what they have invented for the other. This vulgar maux of mine haunts my imagination, in every shape but that I hoped to see her in; I dare hardly trust myself to speak to her!—Od, I would not have the extirpation of the whole female sex depend upon my casting vote, while I am in this humour.

Brid. Mercy on me! here's that cross old gentleman again!—What will become of me?—(*Aside.*)—Do, pray, strange sir, be so generous as to tell me what is next to be done with me?

Gov. Why, just whatever I please, you audacious baggage!—Od, now I think on't, I have a great mind to try a few soft words, and dive into all the secrets of the little ignoramus.—(*Aside.*)—Come, suppose I had a mind to grant you your freedom, how would you requite me?

Brid. Dear heart! why, I'd love you for ever and ever.

Gov. Zounds, that's a favour I could very readily dispense with; and yet, 'tis natural to the poor wench.—Ah! if thou hadst been a good girl, thou hadst been a happy one.—Hark ye, miss! confess all your sins; that's the only way to escape, I promise you! and if you conceal the least, I'll—do, I don't know what I'll do to you.

Brid. I will, I will, sir, indeed, as I hope to be married.

Gov. Married, you slut!—Bad as that is, it's too good for you. Come, tell me all your adventures.—Describe the behaviour of the young villain who seduced you. Where did you see him first?

Brid. Ugh, ugh—at church, sir.

Gov. At church, quotha!—a pretty place to commence an intrigue in:—and how long was it before you came to this admirable agreement?

Brid. Ump—Why—Sunday was Midsummer eve, and Sunday after was madam's wedding-day, and *Monday was our fair*, and—

Gov. Oh, curse your long histories!—And what then said Woodville?

Brid. Oh, Lord, nothing at all. Why, it warn't he.

Gov. No! (*Ready to burst with passion.*) Who, who, who?—Tell me that, and quite distract me.

Brid. Timothy Hobbs, 'squire's gardner.

Gov. An' absolute clown!—(*Walks about, half groaning with rage and disappointment.*)—Who, oh! who would be a father? I could laugh, cry, die, with shame and anger! since the man, who corrupted, left her only one virtue, would he had deprived her of that too!—Oh, that she had but skill enough to lie well!

Brid. Whether I can or no, I'll never speak truth again, that's a sure thing. What do I get by it, or any poor souls of the female kind? (*Aside.*)

Gov. I am incapable of thinking; every plan, every resource thus overturned. I must be wiser than all the world. This fool's head of mine must take to teaching, truly! as if I could eradicate the stamp of nature, or regulate the senses by any thing but reason. Don't pipe, baggage, to me!—you all can do that, when too late.—When I have considered whether I shall hang myself or not, I'll let you know whether I shall tuck you up along with me, you little wretch, you.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

Brid. (*Crying.*) Well, sure I have at last guessed where I am shut up—it must be Bedlam; for the old gentleman is out of his mind, that's a sure thing.

Enter VANE, L.H.

Vane. Ha, ha, ha! my future father-in-law seems to have got a quietus of my intended; and faith, so would any man who was not in love with a certain forty thousand; to be sure, in plain English, she is a glorious mawkin.—(*Aside.*)—Well, madam, how are you pleased with your present mode of living?

Brid. Living, do you call it? I think 'tis only

starving. Why, I shall eat my way through the walls, very shortly.

Vane. Faith, miss, they use you but so so, that's the truth on't; and I must repeat, even to your face, what I said to my lord, that your youth, beauty, and accomplishments, deserve a better fate.

Brid. Dear heart! Bedlam, did I say I was in!—Why, I never knew a more sensibler, genteeler, prettier sort of a man in my life.—(*Aside.*)—I am sure, sir, if I was to study seven years, I should never know what I have done to discommode them, not I.

Vane. Oh, Lard, my dear! only what is done every day by half your sex without punishment.—However, you are to suffer for all, it seems.—You see your fare for life!—a dungeon, coarse rags, and the same handsome allowance of bread and water twice a day.

Brid. Oh, dear me!—Why, I shall be an otomy in a week!

Vane. And an old black to guard you, more sulky and hideous than those in the Arabian Nights Entertainments.

Brid. Why, sure they will let you come and see me, sir? I shall certainly swoond away every time I look at that nasty old black.

Vane. This is the last time your dungeon (which your presence renders a palace to me) will ever be open to one visitor—unless—unless—I could contrive—but no, it would be my ruin:—yet who wouldn't venture something for such a charming creature? you could endear even ruin. Tell me, then, what reward you would bestow on a man who ventured all to give you freedom?

Brid. Nay, I don't know: you're such a dear sweet soul, I sha'n't stand with you for a trifle.

Vane. Ahey! Miss will be as much too complying in a minute.—(*Aside.*)—Well, then, my dear! I must marry you, or you will still be in the power of your enemies.

Brid. Hey! what! do I hear rightly? marry me!

Why, this will be the luckiest day's work I ever did! —(*Aside.*)—Nay, sir, if you should be so generous, I hope I shall live to make you amends.

Vane. The only amends you can make me, is by dying. —(*Aside.*)—And now, my dear, I will own to you, I have the licence in my pocket, and my lord as eager as myself. Our chaplain will do us the favour with more expedition than he says grace before meat.—Well done, Vane! egad, thy lucky star predominates. (*Aside—takes her arm.*)

Brid. Surely my locking up does end very comical.
[*Exeunt, arm in arm, L.H.*]

SCENE II.—*The Drawing-room.*

Enter the GOVERNOR, L.H. musing.

Gov. I have lived fifty-eight years, five months, and certain odd days, to find out I am a fool at last; but I will live as many more, before I add the discovery that I am a knave too.

Enter HARCOURT, R.H.

Har. What the devil can he be now hatching?—Mischief, I fear? (*Aside.*)

Gov. Dear Fortune! let me escape this once undiscovered, and I compound for all the rest.—(*Aside.*) Charles! the news of the house? for the politics of this family are employment for every individual in it.

Har. Bella, horrida bella, sir!—My lord is determined to bring his son's duty to an immediate test—Thanks to his friend's schemes and his mistress's beauty. (*Aside.*)

Gov. What poor malicious wretches are we by nature!—Zounds, if I could not find in my heart to rejoice at thinking every one here will be as mortified and disappointed as a certain person that shall be nameless. So, so, here they come, faith, to argue the point in open court.

Enter LORD GLENMORE, L.H. followed by Woodville.

Lord G. Without this proof of your obedience, all you can urge, sir, is ineffectual.

Wood. While obedience was possible, I never swerved, my lord; but, when you command me to make myself wretched, a superior duty cancels that: already bound by a voluntary, an everlasting vow, I cannot break it without offending heaven, nor keep it without offending you.

Gov. (Aside.) What's this? Chopped about again!

Wood. Did you once know the incomparable merits of my love, even your lordship's prejudices must give way to your reason.

Lord G. Mere dotage! Doesn't her conduct equally evince her folly and depravity?

Wood. Covered as I ought to be with confusion and remorse, I will own she was seduced and deceived.

Gov. (Aside.) Ah, poor boy! one of the two was woefully deceived, sure enough.

Lord G. Oh, your conscience may be very easy on that account; it could not require much art to deceive such an idiot.

Gov. No, no, my lord: why paint the devil blacker than he is? Not an idiot, neither.

Wood. Sir, my father's freedom of speech I must endure; but your's—

Gov. You must endure too, young sir, or I shall bite my tongue off.

Wood. But, my lord, that dear unhappy girl is no longer a subject of debate: she evidently proves her merit by her flight.

Lord G. Would you make a virtue from not doing ill, when it is no longer in your power? Woodville, I was weak enough to believe indulgence the surest way of obtaining your duty and esteem. My eyes are at last opened. Miss Mortimer is worthy a better

husband; but you are her's, or no son of mine. I solemnly promised this to her dying father, and I will acquit myself at all events.

Wood. Can you resolve to sacrifice me to a promise made before we could judge of each other?—You never felt, sir, the compulsion you practise. Will you dissolve the first band of morality, and see your highly estimated title end in me? for never will I on these terms continue it.

Lord G. I almost wish I never had continued it.—*(Walks about in anger.)*—I am determined, Woodville, and nothing but Miss Mortimer's refusal can break the match.

Wood. I shall not put that in her power, my lord. Permit me to tell you, no son was ever more sensible of a father's kindness; but, if I can purchase its continuance only with my honour and my happiness, it would be too dearly bought.

Lord G. 'Tis well, sir.—I have listened to you sufficiently. Now, hear me. Know, this worthless wretch you prefer to your duty, is in my power; nay, in this house.

Har. (Aside.) The devil she is! How, in the name of ill luck, should he find that out! My fine scheme entirely blown up, by Jupiter!

Wood. Why play thus upon me, my lord? Her letter——

Lord G. What, has she wrote to you?—That I was not aware of, nor indeed suspected she could write.

Gov. No, not so ignorant as that, neither. I ordered she should write too!

Lord G. You ordered she should write?—Let me tell you, sir, it was wronging my confidence!

Gov. No, I did not order she should write;—I mean—I mean—zounds, I don't know what I mean!

Wood. So it seems, indeed, since hardly half an hour ago, my uncle himself persuaded me to marry my love.

Gov. Here's a cursed affair, now. *(Aside.)*

Lord G. Can this be possible? Let me tell you,

Governor, if, presuming upon your wealth, you play a double part in my family—

Gov. Zounds! nobody knows his own part in your family, that I see! and this fellow too, to teaze me, whom I loved above all in it. Why, I spoke entirely from regard to him. If since then I have discovered a bumpkin was before hand with him in the possession of his miss—

Wood. If any one, beside yourself, sir, durst tell such a falsehood, it would cost a life.

Gov. Yes; and, if any one beside myself durst tell me such a truth, it would cost a soul perhaps.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Har. This is more unintelligible than all the rest.

Lord G. To end these altercations;—upon yourself, Woodville, shall depend the fortune of this wretch to whom you have been so gross a dupe as to justify the imputation of folly. Why, even without knowing me, she ridiculed your passion, and offered to leave you.

Wood. Impossible!

Lord G. Dare you disbelieve me, sir?—nay, she shall be produced, and obliged to confess her arts;—then blush and obey!—Here, Vane! Governor! the keys!

[*Exit, R.H.*]

(*Woodville walks behind in great agitation.*)

Har. Now could I find in my heart to make this story into a ballad, as a warning to all meddling puppies; and then hang myself, that it may conclude with a grace. Zounds, he must be endowed with supernatural intelligence. Just when I was saying a thousand civil things to myself on my success, to have my mine sprung before my eyes by the enemy; and instead of serving my friend and myself, become a mere tool to old Gravity's revenge! 'Pshaw! however, we must make the best of a bad matter.—(*Aside.*)—Woodville, what do'st mean to do, man?

Wood. Let them produce my Cecilia!—I will then seize and protect her to the last moment of my life.

Har. And I will assist you to the last moment of mine.

Wood. My generous cousin ! this is indeed friendship.

Har. Not so very generous, if you knew all. (*Aside.*)

Re-enter LORD GLENMORE, GOVERNOR, and BRIDGET, R.H. she holds a handkerchief to her eyes, VANE following; Woodville flies and clasps her in his arms; Harcourt takes her hand.

Wood. My love, my life !—do I once again behold thee ?—fear nothing !—you here are safe from all the world !—will you not bless me with one look ?

Brid (*Looking at him and Harcourt with ridiculous distress.*) Oh, dear me !

Lord G. I have put it out of your power to marry, sir, otherwise you may take her.

Wood. Take her !—What poor farce is this ?

Har. Hey-day ! more incomprehensibilities.

Vane. (*Aside.*) Now for the eclaireissement—since, if the Governor doesn't acknowledge her in his first rage and confusion, I may never be able to make him !—(*Aside.*)—I humbly hope Mr. Woodville will pardon me, if, with her own consent and my lord's, I this morning married this young lady.

Gov. Zounds, you dog, what's that ?—you married her ?—Why, how did you dare ?—And you too, my lord !—What the devil, did you consent to this ?

Vane. Believe me, sir, I didn't then know she was your daughter.

Lord G. Daughter !

Gov. So, it's out, after all !—It's a lie, you dog ! you did know she was my daughter ;—you all knew it ;—you all conspired to torment me !

All. Ha, ha, ha !

Gov. Ha, ha, ha ! confound your mirth !—as if I had not plagues enough already. And you have great reason to grin too, my lord, when you have thrown my gawky on your impudent valet.

Lord G. Who could ever have dreamt of—ha, ha, ha !—of finding this your little wonder of the country, brother ?

Har. Nay, my lord, she's the little wonder of the town, too.

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Gov. Mighty well—mighty well—mighty well; pray, take your whole laugh out, good folks; since this is, positively, the last time of my entertaining you in this manner.—A cottage shall henceforth be her portion, and a rope mine.

Brid. If you are my papa, I think you might give some better proof of your kindness;—but I shan't stir; why, I married on purpose that I might not care for you.

Gov. Why, thou eternal torment! my original sin!—whose first fault was the greatest frailty of woman; and whose second, her greatest folly! Do'st thou, or the designing knave who has entrapped thee merely for that purpose, imagine my wealth shall ever reward incontinence and ingratitude?—no; go knit stockings to some regiment; where he is preferred to be drummer!—warm yourself when the sun shines!—soak every hard-earned crust in your own tears, and repent at leisure. [Exit in a rage, L.H.]

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Lord G. He to ridicule my mode of education!—But what is the meaning of all this?

Wood. Truly, my lord, I believe it would be very hard to find any for either my uncle's words or actions—I am equally at a loss to guess as to Bridget here.

Vane. Hey, what? Bridget, did you say, sir? Why you little ugly witch, are you really Bridget?

Brid. Why I told you so all along; but you would not believe me.

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Brid. Oh, dear heart!—I am now as much afeard of my new husband as father.

Lord G. For thee, wench—

Brid. (Falls upon her knees.) Oh, no more locking up, for goodness sake, my lord—I be sick enough of passing for a lady: but, if old scratch ever puts such a trick again in my head, I hope—your lordship will catch me! that's all. [Exit, L.H.]

Vane. I shall run distracted! have I married an—and all for nothing too?

Lord G. A punishment peculiarly just, as it results from abusing my confidence—hence, wretch, nor ever while you live appear again in my presence.

[*Exit Vane L.H. looking furiously after Bridget.*]

Lord G. 'Tis time to return to ourselves. We shall soon come to an eclairsissement, Woodville;—since you won't marry, I will.

Wood. My lord!

Lord G. And you shall judge of my choice.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Har. Now for it; whatever devil diverts himself among us to-day, I see he owes my sagacious lord here a grudge, as well as the rest; and I foresee that his wife and the Governor's daughter will prove equally entertaining.

Re-enter LORD GLENMORE, R.H. leading CECILIA, followed by MISS MORTIMER.

Lord G. This lady, sir, I have selected; a worthy choice.

Wood. I dream, surely!—that lady your choice?—yours!

Lord G. Ungrateful son! had such been yours—

Wood. Why, this very angel is mine, my Cecilia, my first, my only love.

Lord G. How!

Cec. Yes, my lord!—you now know the unhappy object at once of your resentment, contempt, and admiration! My own misfortunes I had learnt to bear, but those of Woodville overpower me!—I deliver myself up to your justice; content to be every way his victim, so I am not his ruin.

Lord G. But to find you in this house—

Cec. Your generous nephew and the amiable Miss Mortimer distinguished me with the only asylum could shelter me from your son!

Lord G. They distinguished themselves!—Oh,

Woodville! did I think an hour ago I could be more angry with you?—How durst you warp a mind so noble?

Wood. It is a crime my life cannot expiate,—yet, if the sincerest anguish—

Lord G. I have one act of justice still in my power;—my prejudice in favour of birth, and even a stronger prejudice, is corrected by this lovely girl:—of her goodness of heart, and greatness of mind, I have had incontestible proofs, and, if I thought you, Frank—

Cec. Yet stay, my lord! nor kill me with too much kindness. Once your generosity might have made me happy, now only miserable.—My reason, my pride, nay, even my love, induces me to refuse as the only way to prove I deserve him!—he has taught me to know the world too late, nor will I retort on him the contempt I have incurred.—Mr. Woodville will tell you whether I have not solemnly vowed—

Wood. Not to accept me without the consent of both fathers; and if mine consents, what doubt—

Gov. (Without, L.H.) Stop that old man! stop that mad parson! stop him!

Grey. (Without, L.H.) Nothing shall stop me in pursuit of my—

Enter GREY, L.H.

Ha! she is—she is here indeed! Providence has at length directed me to her. *(Runs to Cecilia.)*

Cec. My father! covered with shame, let me sink before you.

Lord G. and Har. Her father!

Re-enter GOVERNOR, L.H.

Grey. Rise, my glorious girl! rise purified and forgiven! rise to pity with me the weak minds that know not all thy value, and venerate the noble ones that do.

Gov. Hey! is it possible? Grey, is this my—

Grey. Yes, sir, this is your Cecilia; my Cecilia: *the object of your avowed rejection and contempt.*

OF ACCIDENTS.

Gov. Rejection and contempt! Stand out of the way: let me embrace my daughter; let me take her once more to my heart. (*Runs and embraces her.*)

Lord G. His daughter!

Gov. Yes, my friend, this is really my daughter; my own Cecilia: as sure as I am an old fool, after being a young one, this good girl has a right to call me father: hasn't she, Grey?—Why, my lord, this is the very parson I told you of!—(*Takes Cecilia's arm under his.*)—And now, young sir, what do you say to your uncle's freaks? (*To Woodville.*)

Wood. Say, sir? that had you ten thousand such, I would go through a patriarchal servitude, in hopes of Cecilia's hand for my reward.

Gov. And had I ten millions of money, and this only girl, thou shouldst have her, and that too, for thy noble freedom!—And what says my Cecilia to her father's first gift?

Cec. Astonishment and pleasure leave me hardly power to say, that a disobedience to you, sir, would only double my fault; nor to worship that heaven which has led me through such a trial to such a reward!—Take all I have left myself to give you, Woodville, in my hand.

(*Woodville kisses first her hand, and then herself.*)

Miss Mortimer and Harcourt confer apart.)

Grey. Now let me die, my darling child! since I have seen thee once more innocent and happy.

Gov. And now kiss me, my Cecilia! kiss me!—(*Miss Mortimer and Harcourt advance L.H.*)—Od, Miss Mortimer shall kiss me too, for loving my poor girl here.—Kiss me, all of you, old and young, men, women, and children!—Od, I am so overjoyed, I dread the consequences.—D'ye hear there? Fetch me a surgeon and a bottle of wine:—I must both empty and fill my veins on this occasion!—Zooks, I could find in my heart to frisk it merrily, in defiance of the gout, and take that cursed vixen below, whoever she is, for my partner!

Lord G. Methinks all seem rewarded but my poor

...tion of Cecilia deserves
 ...—But whenever, my dear,
 ... me the husband of your choice, I will
 ... him with a fortune fit for my daughter.

Gov. Protect Cecilia!—Od, she is a good girl, and a charming girl, and I honour the very tip of her feathers now!—If she could but fancy our Charles, I'd throw in something pretty on his side, I promise you.

Miss M. Frankness is the fashion.—What would you say, sir, and you, my lord, if I had fancied your Charles so much as to make him mine already?

Lord G. Hey-day! more discoveries! How's this, boy?

Har. Even so, sir, indeed.

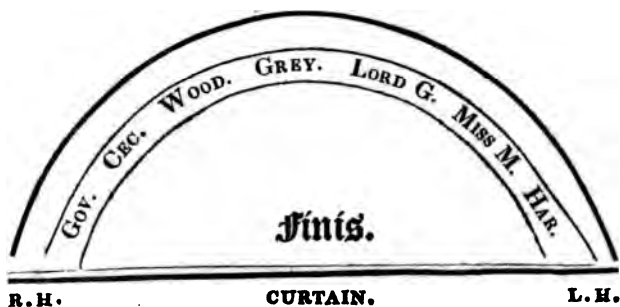
Lord G. It completes my satisfaction.

Gov. Od, brother! Who'd have thought you in the right all the while? We'll never separate again, by the lord Harry! But knock down our Welsh friend's old house, and raise him one on the ruins large enough to contain the whole family of us, where he shall reign sole sovereign over all our future little Woodvilles and Cecilians.

Cec. Oppressed with wonder, pleasure, gratitude, I must endeavour to forgive myself, when heaven thus graciously proves its forgiveness, in allying me to every human being my heart distinguishes.

Grey. Yes, my Cecilia, you may believe him, who never gave you a bad lesson, that you are now most truly entitled to esteem; since it requires a far greater exertion to stop your course down the hill of vice, than to toil slowly up toward virtue.

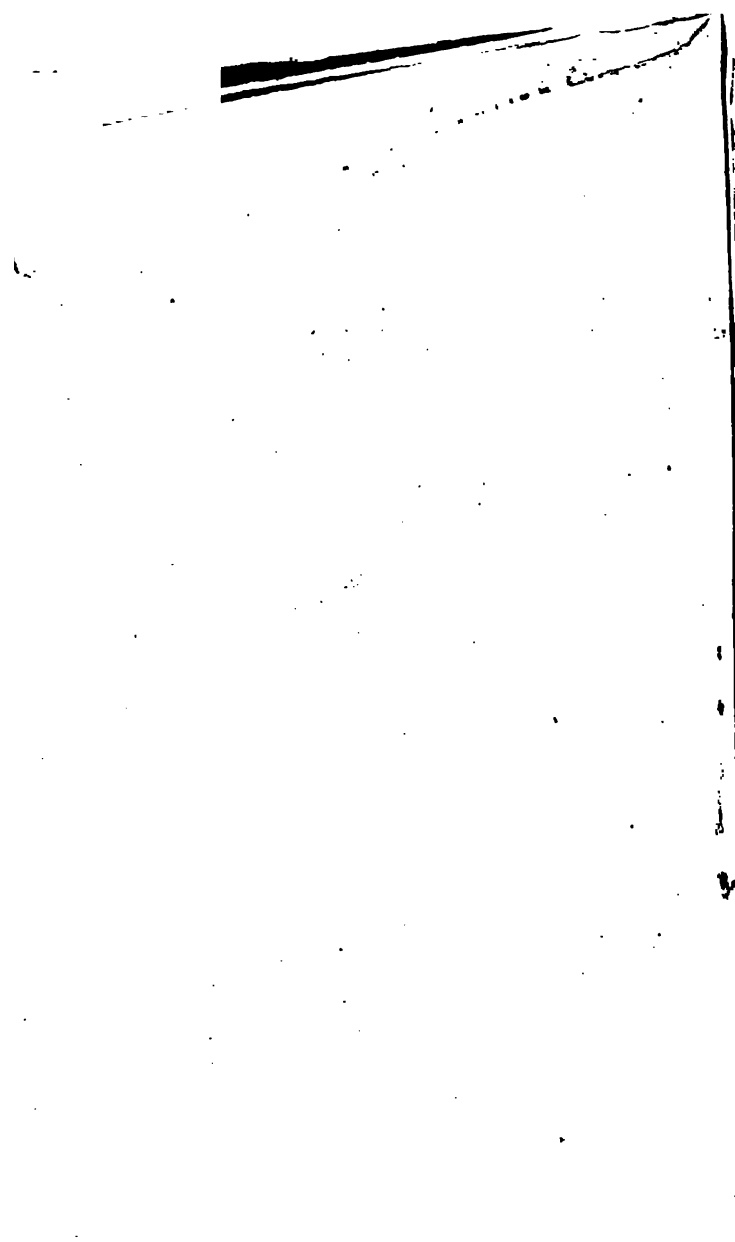
Disposition of the Characters when the Curtain falls.



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